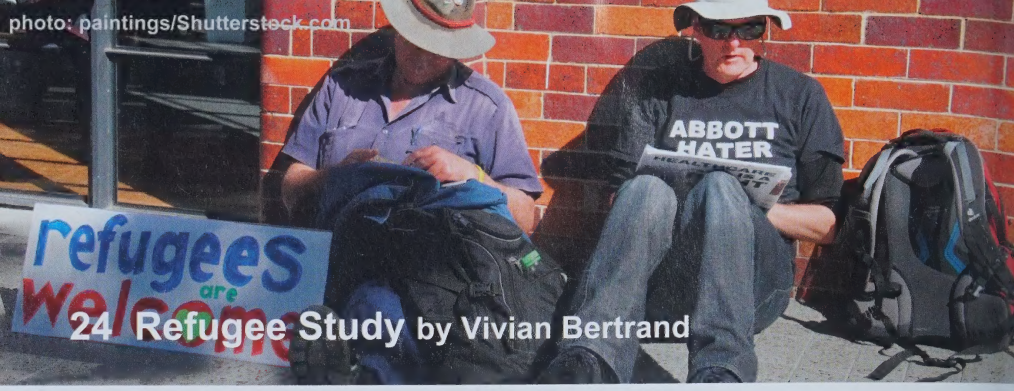
Glad Tidings

January/February 2015



24 Refugee Study by Vivian Bertrand

Contents

IN THIS ISSUE

3 **Editorial**

4 **Second, Third, Fourth, Firth Career?**
by Priscilla Anderson

9 **I Know the Plans I Have for You**
by Allyssa deBruijn

12 **A Match Made in Heaven**
by Katrina Holtom

18 **God's Perfect Peace**
by Erin McAllister

22 **Working Momma**
by Laurie DeOliveira

35 **Be Bold**
by Colleen Wood

38 **Reviews**

40 **Mission In Action**

IN THE SOCIETY

34 **The WMS ... Did You Know?**

43 **In the Society**

47 **In Remembrance**

47 **Circulation News**

Glad Tidings

January/February 2015
Volume 91, No. 1
EDITOR: Colleen Wood
DESIGN: Alexis McKeown

Published six times a year by the Women's Missionary Society of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Member of the Canadian Church Press.

Canada

Glad Tidings reports on aspects of the Women's Missionary Society on all levels. *Glad Tidings* challenges concerned Christians to reflect on their faith through articles and reports related to mission and social justice issues, locally, nationally, and internationally. *Glad Tidings* through its content, encourages readers to become informed, educated, inspired, and motivated to action. *GladTidings* provides a forum for a broad spectrum of opinion and information, thus the views expressed in features, news reports, letters, and book reviews are not necessarily endorsed by the WMS or by the Editor.

2015 subscription rate $15.00 plus applicable taxes: ON, NB, NL $16.95, NS $17.25, BC, AB, SK, MB, QC, $15.75, PE $17.10. WMS members are asked to send subscriptions through their group *Glad Tidings* Secretary. Individual subscribers may order direct from *Glad Tidings*. Please make all cheques and money orders payable at par to *Glad Tidings*.

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to the circulation department at 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, Ontario M3C 1J7. Phone 416-441-1111; 800-619-7301.
E-mail gladtidings@presbyterian.ca. ISSN: 00170720.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund (CPF) for our publishing activities.

Editorial

Vocation, not a word we use much, but one I have always loved. For me, it is much more than the paid work that many of us participate in. For me, it is a lifestyle. It is a journey. It is how we serve and how we find meaning. It is how we respond to God's love.

For some, vocation is paid work. I have always been blessed to have meaningful work that has allowed me to use my gifts and skills. After university and college, while I was first looking for work, thinking it would likely be using my college certificate in Public Relations, God surprised me. A friend, who would soon become a colleague, suggested I apply for a position as a youth worker at St. Giles Presbyterian Church in Ottawa. Little did I know that God had been preparing me for this position, and likely preparing this congregation to mentor this young, inexperienced, soon-to-be youth worker. Since then, God has always called me to meaningful work that fits my skills and my life.

But, vocation isn't just about paid work. Some of us may have jobs that we participate in because we need to eat. Some of us may have jobs because of family expectations. Some of us may have certain jobs because of lack of opportunities. There is sometimes a necessity in work that makes it a true job, and not a true vocation. So for some, vocation is outside of what they do in their paid work. Some, most, serve beyond the walls of their careers, and serve within church, community groups, or in their own homes.

This month, as you read through *Glad Tidings*, you will hear the stories of those who serve. You will hear the story of a stay-at-home mom who learns and grows through the challenges of raising three young boys. You will hear the story of a fascinating WMS member, who has served her entire life, and continues to serve well into her 80s! You will hear of a math teacher who has a vocation within her school, within her home as a wife and mother, and within her church. And, you will hear the story of a young career woman, beginning her first job as she serves in a non-conventional field.

Today, consider your vocation. Consider God's plan for you. Where do you serve? Where are you most suited? Where does your passion most meet the needs of this world? Where can you use your gifts and skills? And celebrate the journey you are on as God's love surrounds you and sends you forth to love others.

Second, Third, Fourth, or Fifth Career?

by Priscilla Anderson

I am thankful for the health and strength to answer God's Call

Never in my wildest imagination, as a teen-ager milking cows on my parents' farm in Nova Scotia, did I think I would be preaching in churches in Toronto! But God is full of surprises. Although I was brought up by parents who were very involved in the church, and took their five children to worship every Sunday, it was not until I attended the first Young People's Camp at Camp Geddie that I was confronted with the claims of Jesus Christ on my life. At an evening service in 1946, after a compelling sermon by the Director, the Rev. Joe MacDonald, several of us went forward to commit our lives to Jesus. It was the beginning of a long journey, sometimes through the wilderness, which is not finished yet.

A few years later, after I had graduated from Maritime Business

College and I was working as the head cashier at a finance company in New Glasgow, I was at a Young People's Conference in Halifax where the Rev. Dr. James S. Clarke was the guest speaker. Dr. Clarke had recently been appointed General Secretary for Christian Education at The Presbyterian Church in Canada and when he heard that I had secretarial skills, he mentioned that there was often a need in the church offices in Toronto for those who had a good knowledge of how The Presbyterian Church in Canada operates. He said he would let me know if there were such openings.

Time passed and I didn't think too much about this. Things in the office where I was working deteriorated, and with the appointment of a new manager, the situation became intolerable. I came home one evening from work and told my parents I couldn't work under those conditions any longer. Even though money and jobs were scarce, they encouraged me to resign. The day following my resignation I received a letter in the mail from The Presbyterian Church in Canada offering me a position in the office of Christian Education, working as well for Helen Bricker, Girls' Work Secretary. This to me, was God's call and I arrived in Toronto in March 1950, in time to prepare for the Annual Board Meeting. As I had no place to stay, Helen Proudfoot Young, who was Secretary to Dr. Clarke, and her room-mate took me in and I slept on the cushions of their sofa until I could find suitable accommodation.

I was then introduced to Miss Evelyn Ewart Henderson, who had offered a room in her home to women missionaries who were on furlough. I didn't fit that category, but, after she had apprised me of the rules of her home, she agreed to let me try it for a month. The rules were "No smoking," "No sun-bathing in the back garden," and "No late hours." The first two were not a problem, but the late-hour bit was because in those days the only way to get home after a movie was the slow Yonge Street car, followed by an endless wait for the Eglinton North bus, and then a walk up Strathallen to Mona Drive. After a few months, she started to call me Cinderella, because I frequently returned on the stroke of midnight. Our relationship blossomed and, when the trial period was finished, there was no thought that I should move on.

Thus began my first career! The office staff became my family and I anticipated being in that congenial atmosphere well into the future.

But God had other plans. The Church Offices were then situated at 63 St. George Street, thus very accessible to the students at Knox College. One of them was Bob Anderson, whom I met over a Gestetner (copy) machine. Thus began a friendship which developed into more than that! After his graduation

from Knox, we were married in Nova Scotia, and he was appointed by the General Board of Missions to serve in Whitehorse, Yukon. Thus began my second career!

In the time we served there, besides being a wife and mother of two little ones in a manse with no running water, I was a minister's wife with all the expectations of what that role involved—Sunday School; offering hospitality to the many young people who were away from home; being involved in the Interdenominational Young People's Society; going with Bob to hold services at two Maintenance Camps along the Alaska Highway—one about 240 km from Whitehorse, and the other 84 km.

Four years later, we were called to begin a new ministry in Islington, a suburb of Toronto. When the congregation erected its first building and became self-supporting and could call their own minister, Bob felt it was time to move on. He was called to St. James in Truro in 1961 and we kept moving eastward. By this time, our children Browne and Deborah were enjoying their baby sister Jennifer.

Truro was an established congregation which didn't depend as much on the leadership of 'the minister's wife,' although I was involved in leading Explorers and helping in the Church School. Entertaining groups was a delight in the spacious manse the congregation provided. We made many close friends and were involved not only in the church, but in the community. For the first time in several years, I could spend time with my recently widowed mother, who lived about 55 km away. I thought we would be there for the rest of our ministry.

But again, our plans didn't coincide with the future God had for us. Bob had been providing leadership at Camp Geddie. One weekend, he brought a pastor from the Korean Christian Church in Japan (KCCJ), the Rev. Sam Choi, who was studying at Knox College, to our home. He talked about the difficulties Koreans in Japan were facing and the need for missionaries to stand with them in their struggles against discrimination. He also spoke of the areas of outreach which the KCCJ was involved with, particularly as they established kindergartens and nursery schools in the churches which would be open to both Japanese and Korean children.

It was then that we began to investigate the possibilities of serving in Japan. I was the foot-dragger as I had to be convinced that this was Christ's call to us. By now we were a family of six, Nori Jean, having arrived two years before. Would God be calling us to leave a congregation which was growing physically and spiritually, to uproot our family and take up residence in a country little

all foliage in Nagoya, Japan

known to us, and be involved in learning two languages? (Actually, I never did learn Korean, but was able to communicate in Japanese, after a greeting in Korean).

After much prayer, we decided to test the waters. We applied to the Board of World Mission, who agreed to send us. We passed the medical and psychiatric tests (the latter I was sure I would fail), and in August 1966, after a month of linguistic training in Toronto, and six weeks of orientation in London, we arrived in Tokyo, greeted warmly by the members of our mission family and representatives from the KCCJ.

Thus began my third career—a missionary!

How does one cover in a short article the 16 years we spent in Japan? Language study, homemaking in a strange environment, English and English Bible teaching, involvement in the Parent/Teacher Association in the International School where our four children were enrolled, attending a Young Women's group in the Korean Church, and a hundred and one other activities, made the days full. The rewards were our acceptance as family by the people in the Korean Churches, sharing in their joys and sorrows. Bob, of course, was much more involved than I was in sharing the ministry with Korean pastors, and in his role as Principal of Nagoya Korean Church Kindergarten and later, Nursery School.

When we were about to leave on our last furlough, I heard a call from God to enter ministry, but I thought as a missionary I was in ministry, so I didn't respond. When we returned to Canada in 1983 and Bob was called to be the minister of Wexford Presbyterian Church in Scarborough, again, we immersed ourselves in ministry in that congregation. By then, all of our children had graduated from high school or university, and all, but Deborah, who had married a Japanese teacher, were living in Canada.

In 1986, I was leading a Bible study in the home of one of the women in the congregation when God's call to the ministry of Word and Sacrament was confirmed miraculously. After an interview with the Rev. Don Corbett, Principal of Knox College, and the Dr. Donald Smith, I was encouraged to enroll at Knox as a General Assembly student, instructing me to take some courses at the University of Toronto as well. These I did, and at 58 I began the journey of going back to school—my fourth career. Five years later, thanks to the prayers of the dedicated folk at Wexford, I graduated from the Toronto School of Theology.

I was ordained on the strength of a call from Nagoya Union Church in Japan where we served as pastors while their minister, the Rev. Mary Kay Sapp, was on furlough in the United States. Thus began my fifth career. The next year, I was called and inducted into Queen Street East Presbyterian Church in Toronto. After four years, we were called back to Nagoya in the same role. Two Interim pastorates followed, one at St. John's in Milliken, and the other at St. David's in Scarborough.

I felt the need for more training so I enrolled in an extensive course with The School of Healing Prayer in Toronto. I have served on the Leadership team since graduation. We are called to do prayer ministry with those who request intensive prayer.

Because pulpits in the Toronto area need to be filled on a Sunday morning, I am still available to minister in Word and Sacrament and pastoral care. When the phone rings or I receive an email requesting ministry, I believe it is God calling and I respond when I am able. At nearly 87-years-old I feel that age is no factor, and I am thankful for the health and strength to answer Christ's call.

I know the Plans I Have for You

by Allyssa de Bruijn

LIFE IS A JOURNEY.

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope."

Jeremiah 29:11

Life is a journey. In my own personal journey, I was led to the study and practice of acupuncture. When I was in Grade 12, our Work Education Instructor placed me in a hospital pharmacy to learn about what it was like to have a job in the "real world." I had requested a placement somewhere in the medical field, and knew that this would be a great opportunity. I liked working there, and they liked having me so much that they hired me to work weekends while I went to school. I was a Pharmacy Assistant at that pharmacy for nearly five years, and while it was what I had wanted in the beginning, I always had a subtle "almost, but not quite" feeling about it. The more I saw from the patients and clients there, and the more I learned about the medical world, the more I knew that it couldn't be the only way. I believe that the body is an amazing and intricate creation, worthy of more than the chemical treatments provided by prescription medicine. As I continued to be immersed in a world that I was losing faith in, I looked for a more natural and faith-filled method of healing. The more I read and heard about acupuncture, the more confident I was that this was the path that I was meant to take.

"I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind.

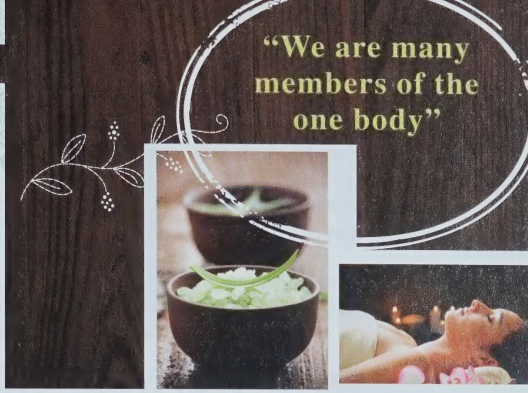
1 Corinthians 14:15

That's when my journey led me out-of-province, away from my family and friends. There are not many schools of Chinese medicine in Canada yet, so I had to go to where the education was. It was a difficult decision to make, and I remember reflecting on how easy it seemed that Simon and Andrew, and James and John could cast away the familiarity and comfort of their nets to follow Jesus. So, I took a risk and made the decision to go. There was such huge support from my family, friends, and my church family. Even the people who didn't necessarily believe in acupuncture and alternate healing respected that it was something I believed in and wished me well. I knew I was carrying their hugs, thoughts, and prayers with me as I moved halfway across the country to start my studies in British Columbia.

Because of my work with the Canada Youth Planning Team, the only person I knew in the area was a Presbyterian minister.

The church was the first place I went to meet new people, and I was welcomed immediately. I was accepted so warmly that it didn't matter that I didn't know anyone yet. Quickly, my nerves fluttered away—I already knew that we had something in common. That small connection made my transition to a new place so much easier and I soon met someone there who reminded me that, "the future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams." Any residual doubt I had about the decisions I had made was lifted in that moment and has not returned since.

While I was learning about this ancient method of healing, I was frequently asked if I found it hard to accept the philosophies of Chinese medicine at the same time as embracing my Christian faith. Honestly, I feel my faith has been strengthened because of it. In an increasingly secular world, it is easy to keep everything compartmentalized, consciously or not. To me, Chinese philosophy brings in an aspect of intricate interconnectedness that can easily be reflected in the relationships between us and our body, other people, and God. Discovering how to express the body in terms of nature helped me to find other links within my heart, soul, and mind, and with the world



around me. The more we learn, the more we understand about the Creator. Similarly, by expanding our knowledge, we are expanding our worship. As Paul wrote, "I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind." (1 Corinthians 14:15)

It can be hard for young people today to find a good job, even after going to a post-secondary institute to get more extensive education. I was lucky enough to find a job right away after graduation. I was especially blessed that it would bring me back to my home. But I know that not everyone is so lucky. Maybe your first job opportunity isn't the best one, but you should take it if it feels like you will learn from it. You will grow from every experience based on what you put into it.

It's important to remember that you don't need to work in a church to work faith fully. You are an example of Christ in the flesh for many of your co-workers. How you share that through your words and actions is up to you, but do not be afraid to be the "Bible guy" of your workplace. Be bold! Share your faith.

We are many members of the one body and we are all graced with different talents and gifts to share. I have certainly discovered more of my talents through my work. I think that what makes me a good acupuncturist is my empathy, my problem-solving skills, my ability to work one-on-one with others, and my desire to serve. But I also respect that there are other acupuncturists out there that have entirely different qualities and that doesn't make them any better or worse at it than I am—just different. Do not be afraid to be different. When people see that you are living differently than others, they will look to see what sets you apart and they will see what makes you shine.

Whatever your job is, do it with love, compassion, dedication, and with a willingness to serve and share. The only way that we can serve God on earth is by serving others. We are all in the service industry together. Go, and serve today.

Allyssa de Bruijn spends her time singing, learning, laughing, and serving in Saskatoon SK. Her home congregation is St. Andrew's, Saskatoon, and her away congregation is Gordon Presbyterian in Burnaby BC.

proVisionaries

Planting seeds of hope.
For generations to come.

2015: The Year of the Gift Annuity

The 2014 General Assembly passed the following recommendation:

> *That every congregation be encouraged to invite their members and adherents who are sixty years of age and older to consider acquiring a gift annuity, thereby providing guaranteed tax-free annual income for the rest of their lives and a significant legacy for the future of the church.*

Joanne Instance, who served as President of the WMS from 2001–04, is a great example of the benefits of gift annuities for both the donor and the church. On May 23, 2014, Joanne passed away in Winnipeg just days after attending the 100th Anniversary Celebration for the WMS and the National Women's Gathering with her daughter Carole. (Both pictured above, along with granddaughter Kella.)

In 2006, Joanne acquired a $15,000 gift annuity through the PCC, naming *Presbyterians Sharing*, PWS&D and the WMS as beneficiaries. In exchange for her gift, she received:

- a one-time tax receipt of $3,346
- guaranteed annual payments of $903.90 (84% tax-free) for a total of $6,607 during her lifetime
- plus she left a legacy of $12,334 for the church after she passed away.

Through her foresight and generosity, Joanne continues to give to the church she loved. To learn how you can become part of the future while earning tax-free income today, contact Sheryl Sutton in the Planned Giving Office.

What will your legacy be?

The Presbyterian Church in Canada
50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, ON M3C 1J7
ssutton@presbyterian.ca • 1-800-619-7301 ext. 265
presbyterian.ca/pg

The above example is for illustrative purposes only. Gift annuity rates are subject to change.

A Match Made in Heaven

OW DOES
ERVING
T INTO AN
DIVIDUAL'S
FE?

by Katrina Holtom

How does serving fit into an individual's life? According to a study from Statistics Canada in 2010 (*Volunteering in Canada by Mireille Vézina and Susan Crompton*), 47% of Canadians are engaged in volunteer activities which was an increase of 6.8% from 2007. (I am a high school math teacher so I couldn't resist a few numbers!) That is over 13 million people in Canada! They devoted almost 2.07 billion hours to their volunteer activities: a volume of work that is equivalent to just under 1.1 million full-time jobs!

So why is it that so many people can offer so much time for no monetary return? Generally, it isn't for recognition or for fame, so what is it? Certainly the Bible sends the message that Jesus came not to be served, but to serve (Matthew 20:25), and as followers of Christ we try to do the same.

I love this description of serving from Joshua Becker, author of Becoming Minimalist:

> *Choosing intentionally to help others flips life upside-down. In helping others rather than seeking our own gain, we find great freedom. Service to others results in liberty. We are able to say no to modern culture's games*

of promotion and authority. We live lives of less stress, less anxiety, and less frustration. We begin to feel more fulfilled, more complete, more alive. Living for others completely abolishes our need for a pecking order. It becomes a great weight off our shoulders when we no longer seek power and mastery over others. ***Real joy is found not in being served, but in choosing to serve.***[i]

Sounds wonderful, doesn't it? And who among us would not want to experience that fulfillment, that freedom, that JOY? I have certainly been on both ends of this pendulum, serving and finding great joy, and being so overwhelmed by my day to day expectations that I am far from joyful. I have asked the question, "How exactly can I live a life of service?" If material wealth is not the answer to joy and serving others is, does that mean I should leave my job and become a missionary in a far off land? As honourable as that may be, I have come to realize that a life of service can be accomplished in so many other ways that are just as valuable, just as honourable, and frankly, just as necessary.

Serving in Our Home

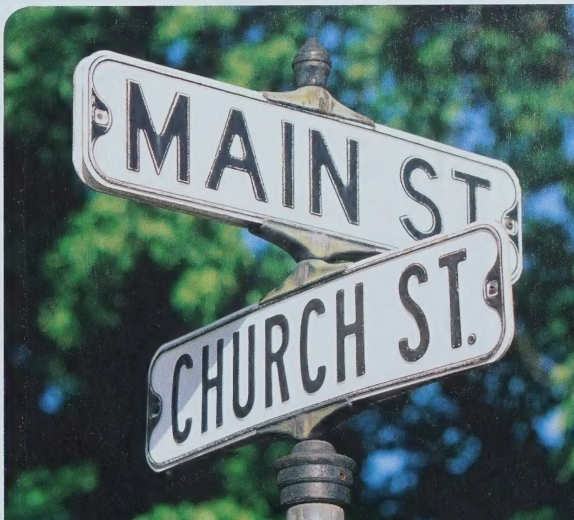
I spent many years as an "at home" mom, and frequently I would experience a feeling of "what have I accomplished?" Due to my family dynamics, I would often have to say no to volunteer opportunities that would require certain time or evening commitments. After a few of these I would feel guilty for not offering my time in service in these ways. Those types of opportunities are great because they are so tangible—you are able to work with a team to accomplish a goal ... and as a society we are so programmed to see results and see them quickly! What I came to realize was the value and service I was giving—and could give more intentionally—was happening right in my home. My attention to

my children was not immediately tangible, but I pray that God will bless that time and it will be something that will be rewarded in many years to come. My attention to my husband (yes, serving him) was an opportunity to serve God by nourishing this gift of a marriage relationship.

Serving in Our Workplace

As Christians who desire to honour God, I truly believe there is no place more significant or challenging as the places in which we work on a daily basis. Particularly, if we are not in a vocation that is faith-centred. We can certainly get wrapped up in the tasks that our jobs require of us that may appear to have no relation whatsoever to our faith in Christ. In Colossians 3:23 it says: "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for people." Whatever we are doing, we can do it for God. This is such a powerful message! Simply the way we do our job, regardless of what that job is, can be a witness to your faith in Christ. The way you greet colleagues in the morning, the integrity with which you make your decisions, the way you handle conflict. Last year, I found myself faced with two very challenging students in one class, each for very different reasons. One student was quite gifted in math, but had huge anxiety about making mistakes. This often resulted in fits of crying during class. The second student was incredibly angry and math class was the last place she wanted to be in. Each day, I prayed for these students and that God would guide me in my strategies for handling each of them. Without taking that simple step, I am not so sure any of us would have survived, much less experienced some success. It changed the way I did things, and also reminded me that these students were also loved and cherished by God and that I should do the same.

There is a great song by Steven Curtis Chapman that really sends this message that no matter what it is we



are doing, it can be done for God:

You wonder sometimes, does it matter at all?
Well let me remind you, it all matters just as long
As you do everything you do
To the glory of the One who made you,
'Cause He made you,
To do every little thing that you do
To bring a smile to His face
Tell the story of grace
With every move that you make
And every little thing you do

Do Everything
by Steven Curtis Chapman

(If you listen to the whole song, I particularly love the line about sitting in math class!)

Serving in Our Church

And finally, there is this idea of serving in the church that is also very important to what God is doing in the world today. Bill Hybels of Willow Creek Community Church in Chicago has said repeatedly: *"The local church is the hope of the world—when the local church is working right."*

If you believe that statement then it would also make sense to serve in and through your local church as well. I am privileged to serve in a variety of ways in my church (and not just because my husband is a minister there.). There is something special about being part of a team that is intent on sharing the good news of Jesus whether it is welcoming on a Sunday, teaching children, leading youth, or even being part of a committee that helps form the infrastructure to keep the church moving. In this arena, not only do you experience the blessing of being part of God's unique work in and through the church, but somehow there is this growth of God in you that is just as important as the work God does through you. My own life with God would not be what it is today if it were not for the people I serve and pray and grow with.

A Closing Confession

There are times when you may not feel like serving. That is normal so don't feel too bad about that. I remember a Christmas morning a few years back where I had signed up to serve and I REALLY didn't FEEL like going that morning. I was scheduled to go with a team to the Family Life Resource Centre in Brampton. This is a shelter for abused moms and kids. We were going that morning to bring some gifts and do a

simple program with the kids. What a great way to celebrate Christmas! But I was tired. We had just had a very busy Christmas Eve with four or five services and I had been part of most of them in one capacity or another. So, when Christmas morning came along I could not say I really felt like going.

Guess what happened? It was amazing. At the end of the morning, I wondered how in the world I could have ever questioned doing this. I was so energized and had experienced the power of God and the hope of Christmas in ways that still give me, "Holy Spirit tingles."

I guess it was a joy-filled match made in heaven!

May God bless you with great joy as you serve wherever God has you.

Katrina Holtam lives in Brampton Ontario and is happily married to Jamie Holtom, Lead Minister at North Bramalea United Church. She is the proud mother of three children ages 14, 12, and 8. Katrina has been with the Peel District School Board for 20 years as a secondary school math teacher and is not afraid to say it!

---

[i] Joshua Becker http://www.becomingminimalist.com/happiness-in-helping/

GIVE A GIFT OF TIME

The Presbyterian Church in Canada 2015 wall calendar proudly features our international mission staff and includes key Canadian dates of observance, unique PCC Sundays, plus the 2015 Common Lectionary.

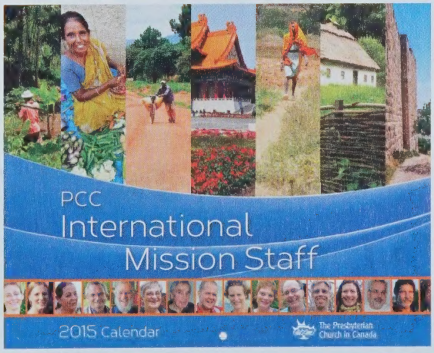
Cost: For 1-49 copies: $2.50/each
For 50+ copies: $2.25/each

NOW WITH LARGER WHITE SPACES!

View the full calendar online at presbyterian.ca/calendar

Purchase the calendar in bulk for
- elders to distribute while visiting
- congregational or youth fundraising projects
- gifts for visitors or speakers

Order today from The Presbyterian Church in Canada Resource Centre
resources@presbyterian.ca
1-800-619-7301



God's Perfect Peace

by Erin McAllister

Every one of us at one point or another has experienced frustrations in our jobs. We've all encountered work overload and difficult personalities among various other things. Then there are those days that feel like one big mess up. But what happens when what you do is not so much a job as it is your life? As a stay-at-home mom, this is something I have grappled with for a while now.

Five years ago, I became a parent and my purpose in life took on new meaning. To say I was thrilled to become a mother is an understatement. My husband and I experienced the wonders and challenges of new parenthood together, and all three of us did a lot of growing that first year. The decision for me to remain at home with our son was influenced by a few different things. As we considered my own work options, the demands of my husband's job, child care costs, and the plans for more children, it didn't make much sense for me to pursue a job at that time. In all honesty I was happy for the opportunity to be a stay at home parent, and I had a strong

underlying feeling that it was right for me. Four years and two more beautiful boys later, I continue to stay at home with our children.

Recently, I have found myself reflecting (in between nursing, diaper changes, meals, clean-ups, playtime, and peace keeping) and wondering about that strong underlying feeling I just mentioned. I can't say that faith had a very cut and dry influence in the original decision to stay at home, but I can certainly tell you that it has shaped and formed me in very real ways and is intertwined with my identity. Lately, I've begun to suspect that it was not only a good and logical choice for our family, but also part of God's plan for drawing *me* into a deeper faith.

On any given day, you can find me feeling both entirely grateful for my current situation and at the same time somewhat concerned about whether I am doing a good job. There's that word again—job. It seems a funny choice to describe what I do. Don't get me wrong, with three young boys there's never a shortage of work to be done. It's often messy, sometimes chaotic, and almost always loud, but trying to measure the success of a day can be tricky. Six years ago when I was working in an office setting, there were very concrete ways to measure my productivity and job progress. Between coaching, goal setting, and feedback from management and coworkers, I was always acutely aware of how things were going. What constitutes a good and productive day at home with the kids seems to constantly change and can often depend on my frame of mind.

Goals for the day go out the window quicker than you can say, "parking lot tantrum." And, though blessed with a supportive partner who is always ready to hear about the highs and lows of the day and offer encouragement, my worries continue to revolve around whether I am getting enough done while at the same time being an attentive and nurturing mother.

I have never questioned the importance of the work before me each day. I value the opportunity to be

I value the opportunity to be with my sons full time and consider it a privilege.

with my sons full time and consider it a privilege. This could be one reason why the struggles feel so much more daunting than any I have faced in the past. I have responsibilities as a care giver but it is so much more than that. I am a parent trying to grow loving and healthy relationships with my children. When things really are not going well, it seems impossible to chalk it up to a bad day on the job. There are always deeper issues that come into play and during especially low moments, I find myself feeling down and wishing I was a better mother.

It is a difficult spot to be in and not necessarily an easy one to explain or talk about with others. Even with an amazing support system of family and friends ready to listen and offer understanding, there are times when I am overwhelmed with self-doubt. It is then that I think about God's love and forgiveness and how I have never experienced more of a need for it than now.

There is a verse of scripture I have found myself turning to frequently over the last year or so: "You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you." (Isaiah 23:3 NLT) Sometimes, I think of it or repeat it out loud during a particularly trying moment (like when all three kids are crying and I feel like joining them). It helps me to remember that I can rely on God to keep me steady and stable even during life's upsets. Caring for three young boys comes with inevitable challenges no matter which approach I take or what advice I heed. Yet, the more I look to and rely on God the greater my peace of mind, body, and soul.

Paul writes, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6-7 NIV)

If being a stay-at-home mom has taught me anything, it is to pray more. You might read that and see it as a bit funny but it's the honest truth. Scripture and prayer have been in my life for a very long time now,

but these past years of being home with the children have given me not only the opportunity but the need to give them a more prominent part. It has taken awhile, but I am coming to see more and more how God uses my situation and role to connect with me, shape me, and mould me more into the person I was created to be.

These days I find myself feeling more thankful than ever before. Regardless of any challenges that the work of caring for my children presents, I am experiencing the most joyful and rewarding time of my life. I do my best to relish each of the amazing moments and believe me when I say there are many. Every day has its share of new discoveries, excitement over accomplishments, incredible smiles, laughter, play, and all of the hugs and kisses I can get. I am also learning to be thankful for the struggles because they have brought me to a place of deeper reliance on God.

I may not be able to measure the success of a day at home in the same way I would have at the office, but I don't need a checked-off list of goals to see God's abundance in my life. When problems or frustrations surface, I may not always handle them perfectly, but God's mercy is there too.

Sometimes I like to wonder about how I will continue to stretch and learn over the next years of being a stay-at-home mom. It is exciting to know that as my kids grow, so do I. I thank God for this and pray he will guide me each day. I have been blessed with wonderful and fulfilling work and I have never been happier that it was all part of the plan.

Erin McAllister lives in Windsor Ontario with her husband Scott and their three sons Wesley (5), Grant (3), and Bryce (1). She is a SAHM (stay-at-home mom) with a passion for music and photography. Erin and her family are actively involved at University Community Church where Scott serves as the minister.

I want to set an example [for my girls] and show them that women can be independent, financially stable, and able to define themselves in many ways.

Laurie with her husband, Carlos, and two daughters, Mikayla and Kaitly
Photo: Amanda Sills

Working Momma

by Laurie DeOliveira

Do I love my job and want to contribute to my household income? Yes. Do I love my children and want to spend as much time with them as I can during their formative years? Yes. So now what?

I have two children (and am expecting our third baby next month) and have twice gone over the benefits and drawbacks, completed the spreadsheets, assessed my finances, reflected on the personal meaning of my career, and have decided to return to work.

Returning to work after having a child is a very personal decision, and every mother makes the decision she feels is right for her situation, family, and self. For some, there may not be a choice, while others like me may have the privilege to make a choice as to whether to return to work.

I am a social worker at a downtown hospital and have a Masters of Social Work. I remember hours of staying up late to finish papers and studying for exams. I completed seven years of post-secondary education in order to obtain the credentials necessary for my current career. I work with patients and families in acute care and help them cope with trauma, loss, and managing sudden

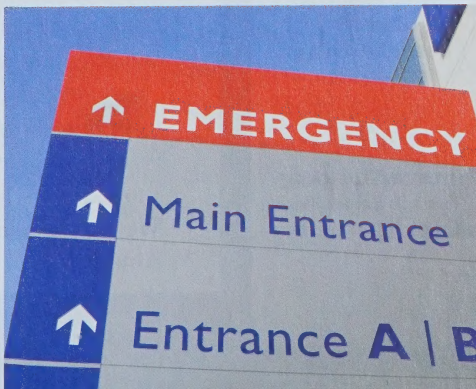
hospitalizations. It is tough, yet personally gratifying work. I leave in the early morning and look forward to finding out how I will spend my day, as every day is different. I leave work with the stories patients and family share with me and am consistently amazed at how resilient people can be.

When you take into account the cost of daycare for two children, my net income is rather small (my colleagues and I joke that you don't go into social work to get rich). My husband and I could have moved to a smaller home further away from the city or made other choices that could have allowed for a single income household, but income alone held a relatively smaller influence in the decision to be a working mother.

One of the most significant factors I take into consideration is the role I play in my children's lives. Personally, when I think of myself as a role model for my children (both girls), I want to set an example and show them that women can be independent, financially stable, and able to define themselves in many ways. I want my children to have lived the experience of a woman who chose to define herself through not only the caring relationships with family members, but also someone who has created career goals and achieved professional success. I hope that my work will one day, when they are old enough to understand, allow my children to have an additional respect for me as a person.

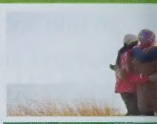
I have been on two maternity leaves and I recognize how incredibly difficult it is to be a stay-at-home parent. Beyond the professional and personal satisfaction of work, I also appreciate the little things—like coffee breaks, bathroom trips without fingers waving to me under the door, and the quiet commute that is time just for me. And yet there are also many days when I desperately miss my children and count down the minutes until the day is over or the days until my next vacation to be with them. As I approach my third maternity leave, I am truly looking forward to more time with my children; however, with three children under five at home, I may instead find myself counting down the days before returning to the "relaxing pace" of acute care hospital social work.

Do I love my job and want to contribute to my household income? Yes. Do I love my children and want to spend as much time with them as I can during their formative years? Yes.



refugees

"Refugees have been deprived of their homes, but must not be deprived of their futu
UN Secretary-General Ban Ki



by Vivian

This is the third of four mission studies on the topic of social justice. The following sessions are planned:

The Plight of the Roma People
in May/June 2015 edition

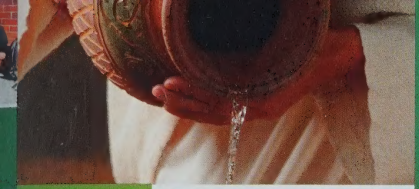
What is Social Justic?
was in July/August 2014 edition

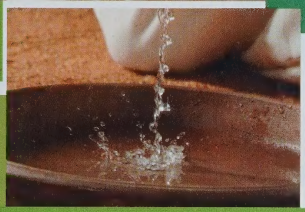
Human Trafficking
was in September/ October 2014 edition

Opening Prayer

Pray for refugees, for an end to the conflicts and crises that have forced them out of their homes, and for the people who are helping them:

Almighty and compassionate God,
We pray for the refugees of the world who have been forced to flee their homes.
Give them endurance, safety, and hope.
We pray for peace in the Middle East, Africa, and Ukraine.
We pray for the people helping refugees in refugee camps and in host countries around the world.
We pray that with your Holy Spirit, the Comforter, we may make a difference in the lives of refugees through our prayers and our actions.
Help us to live with love and in hope as we look forward to the day when you will bring peace and justice to all.
We pray this in Jesus' name.
Amen.





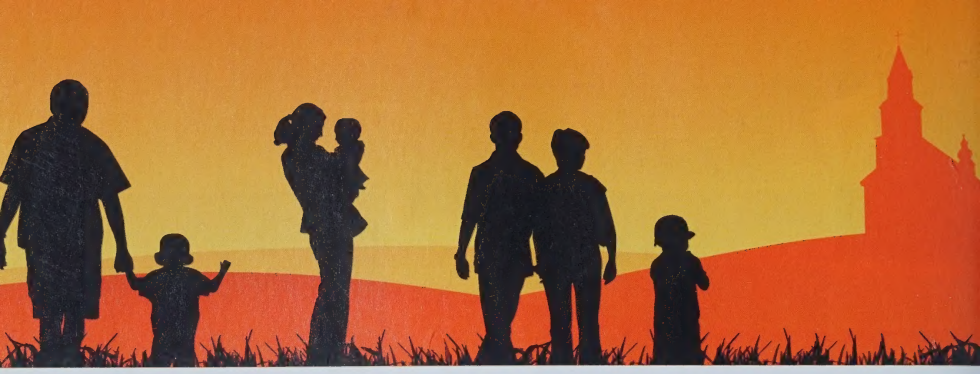
sponsorship

global humanitarian system

Introduction

When I was a child, my church sponsored a refugee family from Laos and my parents were very involved with the family. I remember trying to help the children learn English and how scared and shy they seemed at first. With excitement, and often curiosity about the food we were eating ("Is this squid? Octopus?!"), my sisters and I attended many celebrations at their homes—baptisms, birthdays, and weddings. A few family members came to Canada first, but more and more came until I couldn't remember all of their names or how they were all related. They shared harrowing stories of travelling by night in boats or even swimming for safety as they escaped the violence in their country. Despite the challenges they faced, or the horrors they experienced during their exodus, they were generous people and quick to explode into magnificent smiles. When I return to my hometown now as an adult, I take my children to a Thai restaurant that some members of the family own, and the mother brings us back to the kitchen where she gives us extra food and tells my children to call her "grandma."

Refugees leave their country out of desperation. Most refugees feel they have no other choice, but to flee for safety. A refugee is "a person outside of his or her country of origin who has a well-founded fear of being persecuted in their home country for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion."[i] This is in contrast to a migrant worker or an immigrant. Migrant workers and immigrants choose to leave their country of origin, but are not at risk of persecution if they return. The difference between a migrant and a refugee is choice. A refugee feels there is no other alternative but to leave.[ii]



Most refugees do not travel long distances to countries like Canada. In fact, less than 0.5 percent of the world's refugees settle in a country like Canada.[iii] Instead, they move to neighbouring countries. Almost 9 out of every 10 of the world's refugees are living in a country that is struggling to meet the needs of its own citizens.[iv]

Becoming recognized as a refugee and allowed to settle in a new country like Canada can be a very difficult process. A refugee can make a claim outside of Canada, if they are sponsored. In this case, the Canadian government identifies refugees while they are still overseas and through the refugee sponsorship program brings them to Canada for resettlement. Their status as a refugee will be confirmed before they reach Canada. If they are not sponsored, they may declare that they are seeking protection as a refugee at Canada's international borders and airports. In this case, they first must complete Citizen and Immigration Canada documents and their claim must be found eligible. Then they must complete a Basis of Claim (BOC Form) within 15 days. Then they wait for a refugee hearing. The entire process can take years. (If a person claims refugee status when already in Canada, there is much more paper work to do in addition to the BOC.)

In my early twenties, I volunteered with Latin American refugees who were trying to navigate the refugee determination system. They were not sponsored by the government or a private group (such as a church); they had claimed refugee status upon arriving at a Canadian port of entry. Many of them seemed full of sorrow or fear. Some had endured unspeakable violence or terror, and their faces showed their pain. The future of their refugee claim was uncertain. I helped translate for them as they prepared their documentation for their refugee hearing.

> Refugees are screened by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) and they receive limited, if any, social assistance, and their healthcare costs are much less than other Canadians.[xix]

The refugee determination process can be difficult for individuals for many reasons: Many refugees speak neither English nor French, and they must describe the details of why they had to flee their country and the kinds of danger and persecution they faced. "It can be traumatic, culturally shameful, or frowned upon to admit to being beaten, harassed, or raped. A refugee may not trust government officials, knowing that they were persecuted by the government in their own country. They need to know the legal language that the people reviewing the forms will understand. This can be particularly challenging if English or French is their second language. Cultural differences can also make it difficult to tell their story in ways that will be understood by legal minds."[v]

If there are questions of identity or possible safety concerns, refugees may be detained, in some cases in federal prisons. Pregnant women and children are sometimes detained. Refugees may be mixed in with the criminal population, despite not being convicted of a criminal offence, and family members, lawyers, and other advocates may have a difficult time accessing these prisons.[vi] After the paperwork is completed, the claimant must await a hearing. If the government does not determine them to be a refugee, they are sent back to their country of origin.

The world is currently facing a refugee crisis. The global humanitarian system is overstretched by the crises in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Libya, South Sudan, and Ukraine.[vii] The United Nations frequently refers to "global forced displacement." This number—which now exceeds 51 million people—includes refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced people.[viii] An asylum seeker is a person who says they are a refugee, but their claim has not yet been definitively evaluated.[ix] Internally displaced people

Act 11:19

Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that took place over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, and they spoke the word to no one except Jews.

Grace Calgary sponsored a refugee family from Eritrea arriving in Canada May, 2014. Photo: PWS&D

Action Réfugiés Montréal, QC, works with refugees who are seeking justice and safety in the greater Montreal region. ARM's knowledgeable and caring staff understands Canada's complex refugee laws and regulations, and knows how to best support people going through the refugee process.

are still living within their own country, but they have left their home due to war, famine, and/or persecution. They are still under the care of their government, even though they may live in temporary camps. If they leave their country, they become asylum seekers or refugees. Many refugees and internally displaced people live in exile for years, waiting to return home safely.[x]

Biblical Accounts of Refugees

The Bible includes many stories of refugees fleeing for fear of persecution or other threats, such as drought and famine. In Genesis, Abram became a refugee when he moved to escape a famine: "Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt to reside there as an alien, for the famine was severe in the land" (Genesis 12:10). The Israelites are one of the oldest and perhaps best known examples of refugees. Assyrian rulers conquered the land of the Israelites in 740 BC.[xi] The Israelites were refugees for centuries, "At the end of the 430 years, to the very day, all the LORD's divisions left Egypt" (Exodus 12:41).

Jesus was a refugee as an infant. He and his parents fled from political persecution to Egypt, "Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.' Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt." (Matthew 2:13–14).[xii]

Members of the early church became religious refugees when they were displaced due to religious persecution, "On that day a great persecution broke

out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria" (Acts 8:1). "Now those who had been scattered by the persecution that broke out when Stephen was killed traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch...." (Acts 11:19).

Biblical Reflection

> **"At the end of 2013, the global number of forcibly displaced people reached 51.2 million."**[xviii]

Jeremiah chapter 29 includes a letter that Jeremiah sent to those in exile in Babylon. Here is part of that letter:

> "For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me, says the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile." (Jeremiah 29:11–14)

Many of us have experienced the feeling of being uprooted or like a "stranger" or an "alien" at some point in our lives. Have you ever felt uprooted or like an "alien"? Do you relate to this passage? How does it speak to you?

Many scripture passages include reminders to the Israelites of their exile and their responsibility to respond to others accordingly. Read Deuteronomy 10:17–19 and Leviticus 19: 33–34.

Do you know of any refugees or immigrants who have experienced oppression in your community?

When you see a person who cannot speak English or French or who looks like they are new to Canada, what kinds of questions or thoughts go through your head? Are you curious about their life story? Do you ever make assumptions about them or about how or why they moved to Canada? Do you react differently to different groups of people (e.g., Asians, Africans, Latin Americans, Muslims, etc.)?

Can you think of a time when you loved "the alien as yourself?"

As followers of Christ, we are reminded of our calling in Luke.

Read Luke 4:18–21.

Are there opportunities in your community or in your congregation for you to become involved with refugees?

What are Some of the Key Issues of Our Day?

Yesterday on the radio I heard of an abandoned city in Iraq. The cars still line the streets, but no one lives there anymore. ISIS militants are stationed nearby, and none of the residents of the empty city dare return. Lamentations poetically describe how the Israelites felt about the destruction of Jerusalem during their exile in Babylon, and it reminds me of the empty cities of Iraq and Syria: "How lonely sits the city that once was full of people! How like a widow she has become, she that was great among the nations! She that was a princess among the provinces has become a vassal. She weeps bitterly in the night, with tears on her cheeks.... Judah has gone into exile with suffering and hard servitude; she lives now among the nations, and finds no resting-place." (Lamentations 1:1–3)

Since 2012, more than 3 million refugees have fled Syria.[xiii] Each day thousands leave the country, filling the highways with bus after bus of refugees. The ongoing exodus is massive, creating a refugee crisis. In April of 2014, Canadian Baptists of Western Canada (CBWC) issued a call to churches to sponsor Syrian refugees. According to the CBWC, "The United Nations High Council for Refugees believes that Syrians fleeing the civil war will become the largest refugee population in the world and the biggest humanitarian crisis in history, with more than 4 million refugees by the end of 2014—more refugees than during the Rwandan genocide. An estimated 10 million people inside Syria are homeless—almost half of Syria's population."[xiv]

Syria is not the only country experiencing a refugee crisis today. According to the United Nations, Africa is suffering disproportionately more than other regions. The media seems to have forgotten several conflicts in Africa that are creating millions of refugees, despite the fact that there is a link between what is happening in African countries, such as Mali, Nigeria, Libya, and Somalia, and what is happening in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Afghanistan.

What our church is doing

As an official Sponsorship Agreement Holder with Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC) enables Presbyterian congregations to sponsor refugees to resettle in Canada. Presbyterian World Service & Development (PWS&D) administers the agreement and helps congregations complete the work of sponsoring a refugee.[xvi] Many Presbyterian congregations have sponsored refugees. For example, after US forces withdrew from Vietnam in 1973, PCC congregations sponsored 250 families in an 18-month period.[xvii]

The PCC published an excellent resource on refugees, *Making Connections: Staying Rooted in an Uprooted World*, The Presbyterian Church in Canada's Study 2010-2012, includes several stories of Presbyterian congregations that have successfully sponsored refugees. They are heart-wrenching and hope-filled stories of human resilience, heroism, and God's grace.

PWS&D supports displaced people in refugee camps around the world through the provision of basic necessities, education, income-generating opportunities, and emotional support. PWS&D also supports refugees through a number of Canadian refugee advocacy groups, including the Canadian Council for Refugees. PWS&D also partners with other organizations to provide housing, education, seeds and tools, and clean water wells, when refugees return to their countries and rebuild their lives. In partnership with the Presbytery of Montreal and with funds from Presbyterians Sharing, the PCC also supports the refugee sponsorship and advocacy work of Action Réfugiés Montréal (ARM).

Going Deeper

Learn

PWS&D is a great place to start. Go to http://presbyterian.ca/pwsd/refugee-sponsorship/ for information on PWS&D's work with refugees. At the bottom of the page you can download, Making Connections: Staying Rooted in an Uprooted World http://presbyterian.ca/pwsd/?wpdmdl=112, which is a great resource for congregations or groups wanting to learn more about refugees, the PCC's involvement in refugees, and what it takes for a congregation to sponsor a refugee.

The Canadian Council for Refugees (www.ccrweb.ca) has a tool kit for faith groups with facts, links, and several ideas for how to reach out to refugees and advocate for them, http://ccrweb.ca/files/proud_to_protect_faith_groups_toolkit.pdf.

Canada has only 5 refugees per 1,000 population and ranks 33rd in the world according to the number of refugees per capita, behind countries such as Sweden, Germany, Switzerland, Israel, and Austria.

Advocate

Visit your Member of Parliament to talk about why refugee protection in Canada is important. One of the most critical issues today is how Canada can help refugees fleeing Syria. See http://ccrweb.ca/en/syrian-crisis-backgrounder.

Sponsor

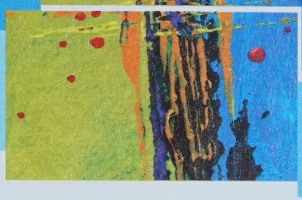
Your congregation can sponsor a refugee or you can work ecumenically in your community to partner with other churches to sponsor refugees together. To get personally involved in refugee resettlement, contact PWS&D.

Closing Prayer [xx]

All-embracing God, no one is a stranger to you and no one is ever far from your loving care. In your kindness, watch over refugees and exiles. For those separated from their loved ones when they fled war and conflict, re-unite them and give them protection. Inspire us to make our churches places of refuge for those in search of safety and peace. Help us to show by our words and our actions the welcome you gave to the strangers you met.
Amen.

Over 2.5 million Syrians have fled across the country's borders and 6.5 million are internally displaced – more than 40% of the population.

Photo: Paul Jeffrey, ACT Alliance



[i] Glynis Williams, Huda Kandalaft, and Shuling Chen, *Making Connections: Staying Rooted in an Uprooted World*. The Presbyterian Church in Canada's Study 2010–2012. (Toronto: PCC, 2009). p.11. http://presbyterian.ca/pwsd/?wpdmdl=112

[ii] Canadian Council for Refugees, "Refugees and Immigrants: A Glossary." http://ccrweb.ca/en/glossary

[iii] Williams et al., p.11.

[iv] UNHCR, "With Displacement at a Record High, UNHCR Urges Rethink of Global Humanitarian Financing." http://www.unhcr.org/542abbc16.html

[v] Williams et al., p. 25.

[vi] *Ibid*, p.24.

[vii] UNHCR. http://www.unhcr.org/542abbc16.html and UNHCR, "UN Refugee Chief Warns Against Overlooking Humanitarian Crises in Africa." http://www.unhcr.org/54292c399.html.

[viii] UNHCR. http://www.unhcr.org/542ab37a6.html September 30, 2014.

[ix] UNHCR. "Asylum-Seekers." http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c137.html

[x] Williams et al.

[xi] Mona Chalabi, "What Happened to History's Refugees?" theguardian.com July 25, 2013. http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/interactive/2013/jul/25/what-happened-history-refugees#Israelites

[xii] International Association for Refugees, "Refugees in the Bible." http://iafr.org/downloads/handouts/Refugees%20in%20the%20Bible.pdf

[xiii] United Nations, Syria Regional Refugee Response. http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php

[xiv] Canadian Baptists of Western Canada, "Call to Churches to Sponsor Syrian Refugees." http://cbwc.ca/2014/04/call-churches-sponsor-syrian-refugees/

[xv] UNHCR. "UN Refugee Chief Warns Against Overlooking Humanitarian Crises in Africa." http://www.unhcr.org/54292c399.html

[xvi] PWS&D. http://presbyterian.ca/pwsd/refugee-sponsorship/website.

[xvii] *Ibid.*

[xviii] UNHCR. "World Refugee Day: Global Forced Displacement Tops 51 Million for first time in post-WWII Era." June 20, 2014. http://www.unhcr.org/53a155bc6.html

[xix] Canadian Council for Refugees. http://ccrweb.ca/en/myths-facts

[xx] Adapted from Williams et al., p.13.

The WMS ... Did You Know?

by Betty Siverns

Presiden't Message: Does Time Really Fly?

How can it already be January? How can it be 2015? It seems that it was only a short time ago that the world, including me prefaced the year with a 19—and before we knew it we had to start writing 2014 on our correspondence and if were lucky enough to remember, on our cheques. And now here we are, in 2015!

Have you noticed how the speed with which time passes depends on what you are doing, or dreading, or looking back at, or looking forward to? It seems the older we get, the faster time goes by. In school, the time between the start of June and the beginning of summer holidays took months! Now my grandchildren are growing up so quickly that they graduate from public school, high school, and even college, faster than I can keep up with them. In my case, it also seems like a very long time before I can see them in the summer.

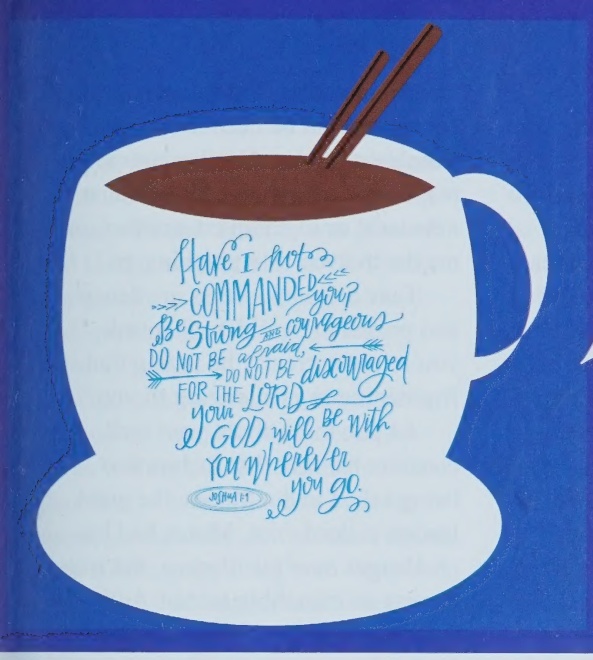
Time has flown by for the WMS as well. We are beginning our one hundred and first year as a society. The past looks good, but as I look ahead I wonder what the WMS will look like in 2025. Will time have blown by quickly because we are so busy living out our calling as we participate in exciting new adventures in mission? Or will time slowly meander along as we sleep through the years and wake up to opportunities lost and the sound of tolling bells and quiet caskets? Will our grandchildren look back and say, "It's too bad" or will they say, "They did the right thing?"

Do we have the courage not to just dream or even imagine, but to actively engage the Spirit as we, being faithful servants, pass the reigns to the new generation of women who already show their capabilities? I hope so, because the alternative is not very attractive!

Maybe we need to recognize now that a younger generation is already taking up the work of mission. They are not doing it in 'the way it's always been done', but are thinking and doing mission differently, 'their way'. We need to encourage and support them.

Dare I suggest that a start could be made right away? Here is one suggestion: Inaugurate a contest calling for women between the ages of 13-25 to write an essay on the theme, Mission Opportunities and Challenges. The first prize might include publication and financial assistance toward a trip to a mission field. Knowing you, I think you can come up with better ideas than this. The possibilities are many.

But, remember, our time is limited and time flies. So now, I dare you!



Be Bold

A Devotional for the New Year

by Colleen Wood

Take a few minutes in silence and prayer.

Read: Joshua 1:1–9

After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD spoke to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying, "My servant Moses is dead. Now proceed to cross the Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the Israelites. Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, as I promised to Moses. From the wilderness and the Lebanon as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, to the Great Sea in the west shall be your territory. No one shall be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you. Be strong and courageous; for you shall put this people in possession of the land that I swore to their ancestors to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to act in accordance with all the law that my servant Moses commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, so that you may be successful wherever you go. This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth; you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to act in accordance with all that is written in it. For then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall be successful. I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." (NRSV)

Reflection

I have a new coffee mug. Our church, last Sunday, distributed 1000 coffee mugs. They encouraged everyone in the congregation to take one for their own use and to give one (or more) away to someone else. The mug is printed with the verse, "Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened or dismayed. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9

I have always loved this verse. Be strong and courageous. Wow, what powerful words. God is with me wherever I go. Often, in life, I have needed to remember these words. Sometimes it has been to get through the small tasks, like dropping a child off at daycare for the first time. Other times, it has been for greater tasks, such as packing up my life because I felt God calling me to move to Toronto for studies and work. Some days we may wake up discouraged or fearful of the day ahead of us. Some new task might seem almost insurmountable. On some days, courage might be needed for the simplest of tasks. At other times, we may feel God's nudge to take on a new task, or to complete another, or maybe to even let something go.

Take a few moments in silence and prayer to consider what task you might currently be facing that is frightening or challenging to you.

As you think about your task, consider the task that Joshua was being asked to do. Moses, the great leader, is dead. Yes, Moses had his challenges over his lifetime, but truly he was an incredible leader. And now, Joshua is being asked to be a great leader. I am sure he thought, there is no way I can fill Moses' sandals. Yes, he had been Moses' assistant for many years, he had already shown himself bold and courageous, but following Moses as leader, God was asking for too much.

Take a few minutes in silence and prayer to consider a time in your life when you felt God asking you to do

something that felt like too much? Is that time now?

Yet, Joshua did become the leader of the Israelites, and he did enter the Promised Land. His life was blessed and God protected him as God had promised. As both a strong military and spiritual leader, he had many great victories.

God was with Joshua in whatever he took on. And God is with us. As I was writing this, I remembered the dare Betty Siverns gave to us in her message. Actually, it was receiving my new coffee mug, along with Betty's reflection, that inspired me to write this. As individuals we are called to be bold and courageous. Perhaps, as a WMS we are also called to be bold and courageous. As a church, we are called to be bold and courageous.

Take a few minutes in silence to consider how God might be asking the WMS or the church to be bold and courageous.

As Betty said, maybe being bold and courageous means empowering a new generation of women to do things in a new way—encouraging them to be bold and strong. Reminding them that God is with them. Maybe it is bold and courageous for a church to print 1000 coffee mugs to encourage its members in their own faith and to share that encouragement with others. Maybe your bold and courageous is giving up your daily 'specialty' coffee to support a mission project in your community or one of the WMS Together We Can! projects. Maybe your bold and courageous is volunteering to teach the junior high class at your church. Maybe it is working to repair a broken relationship. Maybe it is changing jobs.

Listen to God.

Study the Bible.

Learn from the past.

Know, that God is with you in 2015 and beyond.

Prayer

Ever-present God, you were with Moses and the Israelites when they boldly escaped from Egypt. You were with Joshua, giving him courage to take on the role of leader as the Israelites entered the Promised Land. You were with Mary when the angel told her to not be afraid. Be with us now.

As we enter this New Year, we may be feeling frightened or dismayed. We may be overwhelmed with bills or just plain tired from Christmas. We may be feeling your nudge. We may be excited with the prospect of new beginnings. Whatever our situation, be with us. Give us a courageous and bold spirit to face each day and each challenge.

Lord we pray for the WMS. May each member be bold and courageous as we consider new ways to do mission. We also pray for the church, your church. Help us to be strong leaders within our churches and our WMS groups constantly moving forward with you. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Reviews

Somewhere Safe With Somebody Good
by Jan Karon
reviewed by Elizabeth Kidnew

I love a good book. I love curling up by the fire at the end of a busy day with a good book, especially one that ends happily. Don't you? After all, life is not a bowl of cherries. The evening news may be news, but it is seldom good news. Happy endings definitely help. However, more than that, I love a book that makes me smile, one that makes me laugh out loud occasionally.

If you have read any of the Mitford series by Jan Karon, you will know what I am talking about.

And now Ms. Karon has a new book out, *Somewhere Safe With Somebody Good.*

This book does all of that. It may start out slowly, my one possible complaint, but have patience, it soon perks up. Father Timothy, now retired, is as engaging as ever, not supercilious, not arrogant—just down to earth. And, of course, Barnabas, the dog that responds to biblical references, is very much a part of his life as always, along with his wife Cynthia, who is still writing and illustrating books for children about her cat, Violet. Then, there is Dooley, his adopted son, and Dooley's brothers and sister, one at least of which needs Father Tim's extra consideration and patience.

Mainly though, there is Mitford itself and the many characters already known to some of us from Ms. Karon's earlier books, as well as some of her new ones. In fact, before continuing to read this book, having only read a few pages, I took down the first book in the Mitford series from my book shelves, *At Home in Mitford*, another happy ending book, and reread it, smiling and laughing my way through it as I had years ago, when a former parishioner first recommended it to me.

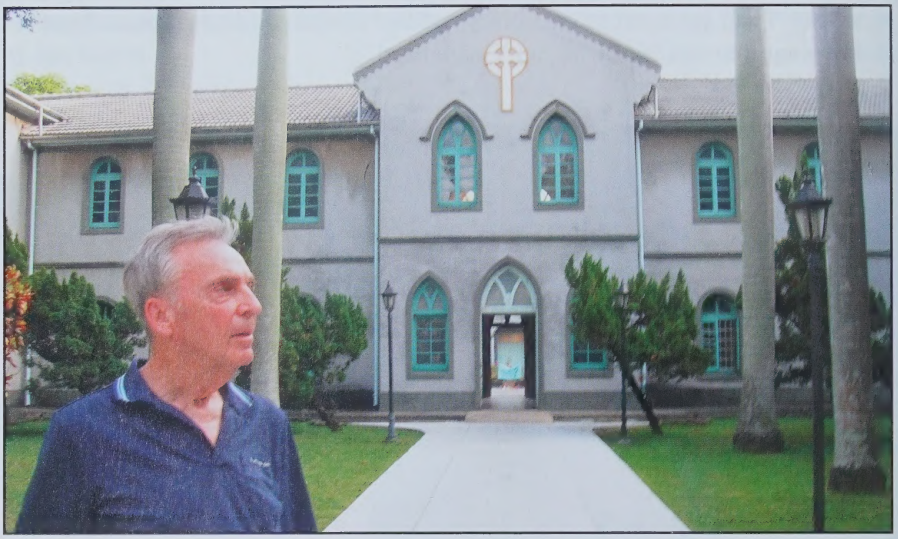
By the way, Mitford's book store is called, Happy Endings; and yes, the proprietor who is having an extremely difficult pregnancy during the book, ends up by knowing that she is going to have a darling baby girl which she and her husband decide to name appropriately, Grace. Another happy ending!

I don't suppose this is a book that is going to stir you to greater mission work. Though you never know! Father Timothy, although retired, is still very much involved in spreading the gospel in his own way. This is a book to enjoy, to savour. I had got it out of the library and had to renew it at least once. I just didn't want it to end. Nor will you. Guaranteed!

The Book Room is Closing 70% Off Current Inventory

Take advantage of the great prices and do your shopping, indulge yourself, and stock up your church library!

Inventory is limited. The Book Room will close on January 31, 2015.



Ted Siverns, Taiwan

When you see the rather uncommon name like 'Siverns', you likely will think of Betty, a person who has long been a member and supporter of the Women's Missionary Society. You are probably aware that with other elected leaders and staff, she is actively encouraging an approach to women's work that will be more inclusive and yet supportive of the current organization.

This would only be a partial picture, however, as she is also a missionary of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, mostly resident in Taiwan and supportive of the various programs of Tainan Theological College and Seminary (TTCS). She also worships at TTCS, as well as across campus and down the street a little at Barclay Memorial, otherwise known as East Gate Presbyterian Church.

So that's it? Not quite. This little piece was to be about me—the quiet, unassuming husband of the fore-mentioned and well-known Betty. (Maybe I exaggerate a little.)

In addition to being Betty's husband, I know her as my faithful supporter through my days in pastoral ministry, in senior administration at our church offices, and through my commuting to teach at Vancouver School of Theology; or while I taught in the Near East School of Theology in Lebanon and now at Tainan Theological College and Seminary in Taiwan.

The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan has three seminaries, including TTCS. Tainan is located in the south (tai) of the nation. The departments include theology, music, and social work. This is the third year that I have taught here. As Visiting Scholar, I try to carry a fair share of responsibilities, including on-campus worship leadership and attendance, association with and support of a local congregation, attendance at some committee meetings, occasional preaching in nearby congregations, and of course teaching.

Teaching what and whom you may wonder? My graduate degrees are in New Testament and this is where I am most needed here. I teach classes of Taiwanese students, which almost always means having an interpreter in class. Although the students do not come from a strong tradition of asking questions, they soon catch on to the idea that questions are expected and welcomed. The students come from many different Taiwanese backgrounds, including many indigenous tribes such as Hakka and Han or are just plain 'Taiwanese', meaning anyone who lives in Taiwan. Most of my students are in the M. Div. program, though an occasional music or social work student may appear.

My other teaching is with the international students in the M. Th. program. These students already have a degree in theology and are usually ordained ministers. What is common in addition to their pastoral experience is that their language of learning is English. During this semester, the students are coming from around the world: India, Madagascar, Taiwan, Uganda, Indonesia, Kiribati, South Korea, and for the next semester, Kenya and Nigeria.

TTCS, and indeed the church in Taiwan, reaches out in support of other people in other places. I am glad of this interest, concern, and commitment.

Back in the Vancouver suburb of Langley, a member of Langley Presbyterian Church quietly insists that she can't find the word 'retirement' in the Bible. A member of Vancouver Taiwanese Presbyterian Church told me that in Taiwan the 'good' ministers remain active after retirement. True or not I can say that both Betty and I are grateful that in our years of retirement we have both the health and the desire to be used in the mission and ministry of Christ's church in Taiwan through The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

WE RESPOND

Thank you WMS!

Thanks to your amazing support in 2014, thousands of women, men and children's lives were changed around the world.

Together, we can continue to forge lasting solutions to global poverty and build a more sustainable, compassionate and just world.

Presbyterian World Service & Development

50 Wynford Drive,
Toronto, ON M3C 1J7
1-800-619-7301 ext. 291

WeRespond.ca

In the Society

Synodical

The Synodical of **Quebec and Eastern Ontario** held their Fall Rally on October 25 at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Kemptville with the theme, Planting the Seeds. We began by singing, In the bulb there is a flower, and then recited the WMS purpose. Irene Nesbitt opened the meeting with prayer, and Shahrzad Kandalaft, from St. Paul's, welcomed the ladies.

Vivian Young led worship on 1 Corinthians 3:5–9. She reminded us that we sow seeds of faith, hope, and kindness. There is always a time of waiting between the planting and the harvest.

The morning speaker was Jill Turnbull from Westminster Church, Smiths Falls. She spoke of her experience at Canada Youth 2014 at Brock University. Many of the youth were shy at the beginning, but by the end of the week they were delighted to learn that they were not alone in their faith. Several of the youth showed an interest in mission and wanted to know how to get more involved.

Then, Joan Hilliard gave a summary of the 100th Anniversary of the WMS and the Women's Gathering. The ladies who attended said that they liked the music, the ministers who preached in worship, the Women of Faith Award banquet, and the speakers—Dr. Samantha Nutt and Kim Phuc.

Business followed. It included the changes coming to the WMS Executive, the WMS national office, and The Book Room. The offering was then taken with the money going to support camperships.

The afternoon session began with singing, Jesus, Friend so kind and gentle. The afternoon speaker

The Regional Staffing Committee held an appreciation luncheon for Anita Mack and Christine Ball in Vankleek Hill on September 29. Both Anita and Christine have faithfully served the Synod of Quebec and Eastern Ontario for countless years and finished their work with the Synod on Sept 30. We will miss them.

was Janet Ham, who spoke about Gracefield Camp. She said that the experiences that children and youth have at Gracefield often transform their lives. The Grandparents and Grandchildren Camp was new this year. Eight Leaders in Training also participated in camp this summer. Janet said that Gracefield has had to rely on God's promise—Be thankful and God's grace will abound.

Appreciation was expressed to the Staff Committee, consisting of Mary Moorhead, Druse Bryan, and Henny Donkersteeg. Mary also read an article which Donna McIlveen had written in honour of Christine Ball's work with the Synod, and it was mentioned that a card of thanks will also be mailed to Anita Mack.

The meeting closed with the singing of, For the fruits of all creation, and a benediction.

Presbyterial

Lindsay Presbyterial gathered at St. Andrew's, Bolsover, on June 26—a beautiful summer's day—for their Summer Rally.

Following registration, the Bolsover ladies presented devotions taken from *Glad Tidings*.

Shirley Mueller, on the piano and Helen Mason, first on the violin, and then on the cello, entertained us with music from The Sound of Music, Mary Poppins, and others. Knox Gamebridge members were introduced, along with Linda Grace, Past President of Presbyterial and Synodical.

Following a delicious salad lunch, a hilarious fashion show was held. Eileen Mennell was commentator for the models: Miss Flossie, Olive Martini, Miss Lottie Locks, and Miss Kitchy Twinkle Toys. We then joined in singing, followed by a skit by Paul Davis and Eileen Mennell. Eileen Smith, President, closed the meeting with the poem, A Talk with the Potter.

Huron-Perth Women's Mission Society Presbyterial held their Fall Rally on October 20 at Knox Presbyterian Church in Goderich. Mrs. Willy Drost, of St. Mary's Friendship Auxiliary, led the rally on the theme of Lest We Forget—Now What? Members were welcomed with coffee and muffins. Hymns were sung and Emily Clutton spoke on this year being the centennial of the WMS, and of the beginning of World War I by giving a retrospective of interesting events that occurred in 1914.

Business items from the recent executive meeting were discussed and Ethel Corry, of the Listowel group, gave a short book review. After a delicious lunch, served by the ladies of Goderich Arthur Circle, our afternoon speaker was introduced. Shirley Miller, President of the WMS Synodical spoke glowingly of her years as a WMS member and gave a

brief outline of her personal history.

After the offering, reports, a few announcements, and courtesies, the meeting closed with a hymn and prayer.

London Presbyterial held their Mission Day on October 16 at Knox Presbyterian Church, Komoka with the theme, Pass on the Faith.

After coffee and refreshments, President Valerie Shaw and Elaine Brown led a sing-a-long. Margaret Greig welcomed us and the Rev. Theresa McDonald led a Bible study on Zaccheus. She had us reflect on what specific words or phrases spoke to us in the story, and to consider what insight that might give us into how God is speaking to us.

After lunch and another sing-a-long, Rev. Theresa gave a very detailed presentation on Camp Kintail. She encouraged us to check out the website for more information on their coming events. Then, the New St. James ladies led us in worship. After a 'thank you' and announcements, we closed another successful Mission Day with singing, Go now in peace.

~Elaine Brown

Local

Ladies from Renfrew, Arnprior, and Carleton Place were invited to join the **Almonte** WMS on October 21 in the Almonte Presbyterian church hall. A few gentlemen were in attendance as well. The Rev. Marianne Emig Munro, minister of First Presbyterian Church in Brockville, was our speaker, and shared a presentation on her trip to Indonesia in June 2012. She was one of three students from Knox College, who attended the conference of theologians and theology students at the Global Institute of Theology in Jogjakarta, Indonesia. While there, Marianne led worship, attended various churches, listened to speakers, walked in black lava sand, planted rice, and visited ancient shrines. She spoke of the marvelous costumes

Centre Road Presbyterian WMS members visited the Memorial Gardens, built on the site of the former Mount Elgin Residential School.

worn by the people and the wonderful, energetic music. Although only 5% of the people are Protestant, the churches have several services on Sunday and Saturday, and are usually packed for each service.

Esson-Oro WMS celebrated their 121st Anniversary in June and presented Alice Robinson with a Life Membership.

Westminster Presbyterian Church celebrated Mission Awareness Sunday in April.

WMS Display at St. Andrew's Kitchener 160th Anniversary.

Remembering

Margaret Wood Brooker
Grace Bethany WMS,
Calgary AB

Kathleen F. Phillips
Margery MacMillan
Kenyon WMS, Dunvegan ON

Edna Murray
Westmount Presbyterian,
Edmonton AB

Nell Dinwoody
Strathcona Presbyterian,
Edmonton AB

Jean Baudoux
St Andrew's WMS,
Kingston ON

Lorna van Mossel
Ladies Fellowship, Calvin
Church, Kitchener ON

Mary Johnston
Bessie McMurchy WMS,
Knox,
Listowel ON

Beatrice Shaver
Knox WMS,
Morrisburg ON

Janet Robertson
Lillian Anderson
Annie Purves Group WMS,
St. Paul's,
Port Hope ON

Margaret Carrington
Richmond Hill WMS,
Richmond Hill ON

Lois Watson
Margaret Hodgins
Knox Centre Road
Presbyterian Church WMS,
Strathroy ON

Anna Mae Starupt
St. Andrew's Chalmers
WMS, Uxbridge ON

Annabelle Grant
Campbell-Afternoon
Auxiliary WMS,
Woodstock ON

Circulation News

A big thank you to all of you have returned your subscription for 2015! This is my first year being this involved in the circulation process and I was overwhelmed to see the piles of subscription renewals that come in.

Also, thank you to all of you who have had patience over the last year as we have worked through some challenging times. I trust that things will run smoother with your subscriptions from here on in.

With this being the first edition of 2015, I do ask you to carefully check your address. If there are any corrections that need to be made, please let me know asap.

For those of you have yet to send in your subscription renewal, please do so asap. We will soon be sending out reminders to those we have not heard from.

Finally, a huge thank you to Katherine Allen. Katherine has been coming into the office to update our subscriptions for 2015. She brings to this task a love of the WMS, a love of *Glad Tidings*, and a great knowledge of many of you.

Mission
Awarness Sunday

The worship resource for Mission Awareness Sunday is not mailed to WMS groups. You can get a copy of the litany, sermon, and children's story at www.wmspcc.ca/mission-awareness-sunday. A copy will also be emailed to those in our database. If you would like to receive an email, please contact amckeown@presbyterian.ca.

For more information contact Alexis McKeow

800-619-730 ext. 319

amckeown@ presbyterian.

April 26, 2015
Theme: ReciproCare in Mission

Scripture Readings:
- Psalm 15
- Genesis 12:1–9
- Mark 16:14–19

Author:
- Rev. Shirley Gale

PM40013283 R9517

Please report any errors/changes in address

Glad Tidings

March/April 2015

24 Easter Worship: He Has Given Us Enough
by Barney Grace

Contents

IN THIS ISSUE

3 **Editorial**

4 **Working to Bring Light**
by Laura Smith

8 **My Beginning**
by Vivian Ketchum

10 **Worship and Action in Toronto's Core**
by Fiona Smith

15 **How to Become an Advocate**
by Colleen Wood

18 **You Matter**
by Erin Joy Wittaker

22 **Children and Easter**
by Colleen Wood

30 **Celebrating Earth Day**

31 **Mission In Action**

39 **Book Review**

45 **News**

IN THE SOCIETY

36 **WMS ... Did You Know?**

40 **In the Society**

47 **Remembering**

Glad Tidings
March/April 2015
Volume 91, No. 2
EDITOR: Colleen Wood
DESIGN: Alexis McKeown

Published six times a year by the Women's Missionary Society of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Member of the Canadian Church Press.

Canada

Glad Tidings reports on aspects of the Women's Missionary Society on all levels. *Glad Tidings* challenges concerned Christians to reflect on their faith through articles and reports related to mission and social justice issues, locally, nationally, and internationally. *Glad Tidings* through its content, encourages readers to become informed, educated, inspired, and motivated to action. *GladTidings* provides a forum for a broad spectrum of opinion and information, thus the views expressed in features, news reports, letters, and book reviews are not necessarily endorsed by the WMS or by the Editor.

2015 subscription rate $15.00 plus applicable taxes: ON, NB, NL $16.95, NS $17.25, BC, AB, SK, MB, QC, $15.75, PE $17.10. WMS members are asked to send subscriptions through their group *Glad Tidings* Secretary. Individual subscribers may order direct from *Glad Tidings*. Please make all cheques and money orders payable at par to *Glad Tidings*.

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to the circulation department at 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, Ontario M3C 1J7. Phone 416-441-1111; 800-619-7301.
E-mail gladtidings@presbyterian.ca. ISSN: 00170720.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund (CPF) for our publishing activities.

Editorial

Although I like Winter, I think that Spring is my most favourite season. I love watching new life begin. I love starting my seeds inside and watching the first little stems of green poke through the ground. I love Spring flowers—tulips, daffodils, crocuses. I even like splashing in puddles and watching the rain fall. For me, it is a season of hope.

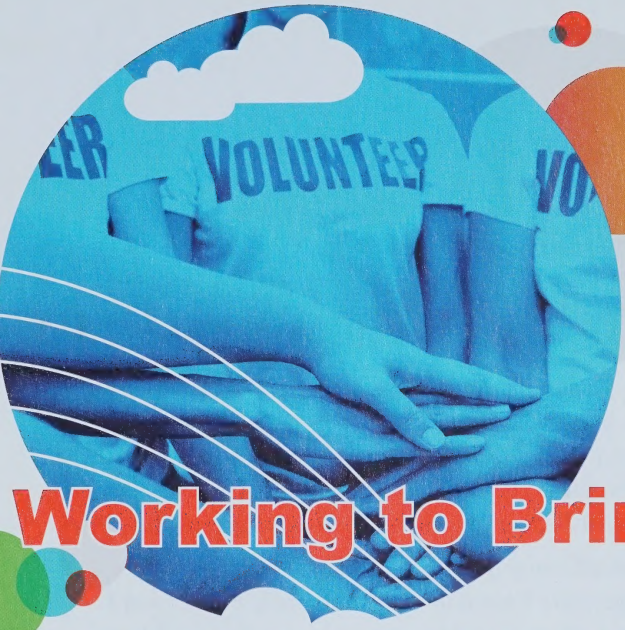
The articles in this month's *Glad Tidings* give me hope. The women who write them hope for a better world. But they do more than hope. They are advocates. They are working to make this world a better place, not for themselves, but for others. They are changing the world.

For me, they have raised many questions. What do I do? Do I do enough? Am I an advocate? Do I work to make this world better? Am I teaching my children to stand up for others and make a difference? Even after several days of reflection on this, I don't have an answer. Perhaps this will be my Lenten activity. Perhaps during the Season of Lent, I will take the time to reflect on the things that most break my heart in this world. From there, I can start working to change them.

Consider what might happen, if we all did this. Imagine, if we all chose just one item to focus on. If our decisions and our voices spoke out against one oppression in this world, and we worked to educate others on just one issue, what could be accomplished? Imagine the impact. This is my hope. My hope is that you will read the stories of these women, and start your own journey of advocacy.

As you prepare for Easter, take some time to splash in puddles, plant some seeds, and consider what breaks your heart. Then consider how you can change the world. For that is what Easter is all about. Jesus' life, death, and resurrection changed the world. Today, with the power of God, we too can change the world.

Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. *Romans 12:15-18 (NRSV)*



Working to Bring Light

by Laura Smith

"O that you would tear open the heavens, and come down ..." Isaiah 64:1

Early in Advent last year, I was struck by this verse. While we wait for our newborn saviour during the dark December days, we pray for God to come and be a light among us. We are so desperate for that hope. And yet, here we are a few months after that son was born for us, and there is still darkness in the world. There is still poverty, oppression, inequality. As Jesus came to bring light thousands of years ago, God has tasked us with being the light of the world today. We are to build the kingdom of God here on earth.

It is this call to be a light in the darkness, to lift up all of God's children, that inspires me to pursue justice in the way I live.

For me, the importance of living my faith started at home. I am fortunate to have two parents with deeply-rooted commitments to living faith-filled lives that seek to build God's kingdom. As ministers, I know that they strive to include the importance of working for justice in their sermons and in the way they provide leadership in their congregations, but they did this at home as well. As one example, it isn't difficult, these days, to find fair trade coffee—coffee that guarantees the person growing the coffee is being paid a decent wage and that the environment is being cared for. Back in the 1980s, it wasn't readily available in Chatham, Ontario, where I was growing up. So my parents bought it from a company out-of-town

and then had it shipped to us. Just a small gesture, but a profound one that I still remember when I am going out to grab a coffee. As another example, every Friday when I was growing up, we would have a small, simple dinner—just muffins or something like that—to remember those in our world who did not have enough food to eat. In each of these examples, and many more, my parents demonstrated that the way we live our lives every day can be a form of worship to God and can seek to build up her kingdom.

I studied international development at the University of Toronto, and, as part of this experience, had the opportunity to work with Presbyterian World Service & Development in northern Malawi for a year. Although I was living in a place that was facing many hardships, it was incredible to see the hopeful witness being displayed every day at the hospital where I worked. Small-scale farmers were being instructed on new techniques that would improve their crops and hence the food available for their families. Volunteers were providing hospice care for those living with HIV and AIDS. People of faith were out in the community, living out their calling to be the hands of Christ. This was truly grassroots action for concrete change in Malawi.

A few years later, I worked in the offices of two Members of Parliament in Ottawa. This was a very different experience than my time in Malawi, but still a great chance to see how change can happen in the corridors of power.

These years were very intense periods of learning and development for me that continue to influence the way I live. While my day job isn't always that adventurous these days—as a federal public servant—I still strive to act justly, love mercy, and

walk humbly with my God.

One of the things I find hardest about trying to live out God's call to us to care for our neighbours is that there is just so much need around me. I sometimes go through phases during which I am somewhat paralyzed by the sheer amount of injustice in our world. I feel overwhelmed, and I don't know where to begin. I then have to remind myself that there are many in this world working for the common good, and that I cannot do everything. So I focus my energies.

One of the issues about which I care most passionately is housing and homelessness. Injustice in this area moves me to outrage and frustration, but also to action.

It is inexcusable to me that people in a country like Canada do not have a warm place to call their own every night. As I write this, it is forecast to be -17C in my home city of Ottawa tonight, and some of my neighbours—God's beloved children—will not have a place inside to sleep. This makes me crazy as it is unacceptable. In trying to do my small part, I am involved with an organization in Ottawa called Daybreak Non-Profit Ecumenical Housing. It is a great organization, started by several different downtown churches in the 1980s. Daybreak provides affordable housing to women and men in Ottawa, and does so with care and compassion. For me, it is tangible work that is directly addressing this need for more affordable housing in Ottawa, but it is not enough. Communities across Canada do not have enough affordable housing, and I feel strongly that Canada should have an affordable housing strategy. So every once in a while, I write to various elected officials (the prime minister and my MP, the premier of Ontario and my MPP, and the mayor and my city councilor) expressing this need. They need to hear this message from their constituents often if any action is ever going to be taken. Especially during elections, when candidates are knocking on my door, I make sure to ask what they will do to address homelessness in Canada and in my community.

In addition to advocating for more affordable housing, I have also been able to attend events organized by KAIROS that seek to educate Canadian Christians about issues of justice, but also to bring people together in faithful action to address these issues. I have tried to bring these messages back to my home congregation of St. Andrew's Ottawa, whether it has been in joining churches across Canada in ringing our church bell for climate justice, or in learning about reconciliation with our Aboriginal sisters and brothers. I have had some great opportunities to learn outside of Canada as well, including travelling to Palestine and Israel in 2012 with Youth in Mission to see how Palestinian Christians are

working to end the occupation, and representing The Presbyterian Church in Canada at the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Busan, South Korea in 2013. Again, these were wonderful opportunities to see Christians engaged in work of faithful justice, or to hear about their efforts. There is so much good work being done.

It is not hard to be involved in seeking a more just world. There are many issues out there, and many ways you can engage to make a difference. The Honourable and Reverend Tommy Douglas said, "Courage, my friends, 'tis not too late to build a better world." As I mentioned, though, it is easy to become overwhelmed. I would recommend picking one issue in which you're interested. Learn about it, and think about how you might be involved. It might be as simple as changing where you buy your coffee. I promise you, every little bit helps. You could also find out what the church is doing and/or saying with respect to the issue. Check out your church's WMS group or committees (mission, outreach, justice), KAIROS, or Citizens for Public Justice. I am sure they will have lots of information and suggestions on how you can be involved! And it goes far beyond financial support: giving your time, raising your own awareness and knowledge, and taking action are all key pieces.

For me, political involvement is also important. I know that grassroots work feels much more rewarding most of the time, but injustice is often systemic and there needs to be high-level change to address it. Our leaders need to hear from us. Join a political party and influence their decisions from the inside, or write to your representatives. Write when you want to see change, but also write when you want to support positive actions that have been taken. A letter of support is just as important as one calling for change.

As we continue to pray for God to come again with healing light, we must also work to bring that light ourselves, as best we can.

"When you pray, move your feet." African proverb

My Beginning

by Vivian Ketchum

The beat of the drum could be heard in the darkness. I sat with my parents by a camp fire, watching what was happening around us. It was confusing and frightening for me. I was only about eight or nine years old, when the Anicinabe Park in Kenora was taken over by native activists in the early 70s. The park was just outside the reserve where we lived and my parents joined the protest. They were not part of the main group of protesters that started it, but still wanted to show their support. I can recall seeing the policemen up on top of the hill and their cars blocking the road. The group of protesters were at the bottom of the park. I could hear the anger in their voices as they raised their fists at the police and waved their flags. I didn't understand why they were angry at the police, but sensed change was happening—I could hear it in the Drumming and singing of the Aboriginal protesters. Open defiance of authority was scary for me to witness, but maybe that was where my earliest actions of becoming a social activist were created—sitting at a camp fire with my parents at an Aboriginal protest.

Then when I was in my late twenties, I was volunteering at the Women's Organization in Kenora, Ontario, learning how to be more organized in the world of being a social activist. I was writing letters to the local newspapers in what we like to refer as guerilla journalism. I was telling my side of being a single mother and how difficult it was trying to exist on welfare. This was what I was generally focusing on in my early beginnings as an activist. Most of my letters to the editor got published and my name was getting out there. Then I did a couple of interviews for a larger newspaper. I was learning how to use my voice in the media.

Then one day at the office, I got a call from my mother about an Aboriginal blockade happening on one of the First Nations communities. My mom wanted me to do something. I tried to tell my mom that I wasn't familiar with how to go about helping them. "Do something!" my mom ordered. If you knew my mom, one had to listen and do what she says to you. I told the director at the Women's Centre about the blockade and asked her how I could go about helping them. The Centre got involved and I learned that once pushed out of my comfort zone, I could do more to help people.

So, what am I passionate about? I hate seeing a native woman with a blackened eye and fresh bruises on

her face. I hate seeing a single mother having to put back the food that she needs for her children on the shelves in the grocery store. I have been there. I was once in an abusive relationship and it took help from others to get me out of that type of situation. I lived in poverty as a single mother and have experienced the indignity of living with less. It is that personal experience that motivates me to help others, especially women.

I try to share my personal experiences through the words that I write. I am an Aboriginal woman. I am a residential school survivor. I come from a back ground of poverty and abuse. My background is not what I am, but has helped shaped what I have and will be. My written words give me and the others that I write about a voice. I have been doing what would be considered social activism for over 20 years or more. I have been at countless marches, rallies, and vigils for different social issues. I have written a few articles for various papers about the social issues that I have been involved with. I still have a strong desire to help others with the words that I write and supporting others by standing next to them in a march.

Where do I see myself in the next 20 years or so? Hopefully I will be at a march being pushed in a wheelchair by my daughter. As long as there are social issues to be brought forward, then I will be there with my pen.

Join the Team – Subscribe Today!

PCConnect monthly e-newsletter:
presbyterian.ca/pcconnect

All the latest PCC news and information delivered to your inbox, once a month.

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA
ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH
May you have a blessed 2015!
SENIOR MINISTER
THE REVEREND WILLIAM G. INGRAM
ASSOCIATE MINISTER
THE REVEREND DR. ROBERT N. FARIS
MUSIC DIRECTOR: DANIEL BICKLE

Worship and Action in Toronto's Core

by Fiona Smith

St. Andrew's Church, King Street, has had a strong presence in downtown Toronto since 1830 and today it is an active and thriving part of the downtown community. The congregation supports a number of social justice initiatives and is proud of its longstanding involvement with a variety of missions and agencies that are supported by The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

We are a church that is well aware of our history and its long tradition of social action based in the Social Gospel movement dating back to the late 19th century, when St. Andrew's established the famous Nelson Street Institute and later the St. Andrew's Institute. It conducted educational programs for new immigrants and the urban poor and was the first of its kind in Canada. It provided

night school programs especially geared to immigrants, youth clubs, a gymnasium, soup kitchen, and mothers' support groups. Needy children escaped the city for the summer at their Holiday House on Lake Simcoe and they even founded a penny savings bank for families.

Today, St. Andrew's coordinates social justice initiatives through a Committee of the Session named the Outreach Ministry. It is made up of the Associate Minister, the Rev. Dr. Bob Faris, two members of Session, and four members of the congregation. As our mission statement says: "The Outreach Ministry seeks to fulfill the mission of St. Andrew's in the wider community, both with the desire to strengthen the visible presence of the Church and to strive towards the biblical vision of social justice in our city and world." Members meet monthly to plan and coordinate work and build relationships with each of our missions. We ask them how best we can support them and actively engage our congregation in offering their time, talents, and gifts. Our Spring and Fall book sales, held on the church's front lawn, raise money and take our outreach message to the street.

Our most well-known outreach initiative is Out of the Cold. It has been more than 20-years since we first opened our doors to people living on the street and offered them a place to enjoy a hot meal. Every Monday night from November until April, we welcome between 250 to 300 guests into the Great Hall for food and friendship. Our fabulous chef, Maureen Strong, coordinates a large team of volunteers on Sunday afternoon and all day Monday to prepare the delicious meals. Sunday volunteers sit together at big round tables chatting and chopping and peeling hundreds of pounds of vegetables, while the baking crew makes amazing desserts and the kitchen crew the main meat dish.

Monday is a full day of cooking in the kitchen, setting tables, and getting everything ready in the hall for the 6 p.m. rush. We serve our guests at the table the way we do our own family and friends and get rave reviews about the quality of the food and the hospitality. There is also a very popular clothing boutique operated by Darlene Treen. She does a wonderful job satisfying all the guests' requests for just the right size shoes, a warm coat, or their favourite colour of sweater. They also give out toiletries, books, and magazines—all of which are donated.

A weekly newsletter or "epistle" written by one of our volunteers sums up the evening and lists the weekly menu and comments from some of the guests. Our December 22, 2014, dinner was:

- Sweet potato and red lentil soup
- Roast beef and Yorkshire pudding

- Carrot and ginger snap peas
- Vegetarian strudel with rice, pecans, mushrooms, cranberries, and feta
- Sticky toffee pudding and ice cream

And the responses from our guests: "Top notch dinner," "Delicious as always," and "I'm so full I can't move or breathe!"

On Tuesday mornings throughout the year, volunteers offer a hot and hearty breakfast to 120-150 guests. We have a very consistent group of volunteers, led by Maria Agueci, who arrives at St. Andrew's around 5:30 a.m. to start the morning cooking. While many of the Out of the Cold volunteers are members of the congregation, there are many others who work in downtown businesses or live in neighbouring condos. They give a few hours of their time to make a difference in their lives and in the lives of others. Out of the Cold is supported both by individual donations and corporate donations. A recent generous donation came from a group of nearby restaurants looking to support a downtown group involved in social action.

For many years, St. Andrew's has had a strong relationship with Evangel Hall Mission (ehm) supporting the work they do in offering meals, housing, and dental care to those who cannot afford it. This summer we collected camping equipment for their camps and more than 50 children attended a free youth camp. We also provided needed TTC tickets for the Transit for Teen program that helps young people stay in school. Last year, we prepared and served a Sunday night dinner which we called Smile, Dinner is on Us. We raised money to provide the meal and make a donation to the dental clinic.

We also support Portland Place, a non-profit housing corporation and mission of The Presbyterian Church in Canada that is located in downtown Toronto. It offers a caring community solution to the problems of homelessness, poverty, and housing challenges faced by many living in the downtown core. This Fall, a group from St. Andrew's held a BBQ for the residents and shared an evening of food and fellowship. Many in our congregation enjoyed attending the annual fundraiser and silent auction held this past November at Glenview Presbyterian Church.

St. Andrew's is also a supporter ECUT, the Ecumenical Chaplaincy at the University of Toronto. ECUT is a Christian voice, rooted in the traditions of The Presbyterian Church in Canada and The United Church of Canada, for those who are studying, working, and living at the University of Toronto. They have a staff of two Chaplains and offer dynamic programs on campus in areas, such as ecology, peace, gender and sexuality,

and scripture study. Their program Qu(e)erying religion supports the LGBTQ community. As one participant in that important program said: "QR really made a difference when I hit rock bottom this year. This is a place where I can be open and honest, safe and sane."

Outreach Ministry book sale (above) and packing Christmas bags for OOTC (right)

Three members of St. Andrew's sit on the board or personnel committee of ECUT and we also support the annual Gala fundraiser.

St. Andrew's has a long association with Boarding Homes Ministry (BHM) and with their chaplain, the Rev. Rodger Hunter. St. Andrew's congregation has been a major donor, and it has provided dedicated Board members and visitor teams. Boarding Homes Ministry nurtures Christian community by linking church visitors with residents of local homes. The residents of these privately owned-and-operated homes graciously welcome team members to visit, pray and sing together, share food, and spend time together. Many people live in poverty and isolation in these houses and suffer from mental illness. They are marginalized and outcasts in our society. In this important lay ministry church, members step outside the walls of the church and meet with residents to form a spiritual community. As one resident says, "I wouldn't be alive today, if I didn't delight in God."

This past Fall, St. Andrew's held a series of workshops using the Cat Jeoffry curriculum, prepared by BHM and based on the 18th century poem by Christopher Smart and specially commissioned artwork, which examines the church's role in embracing people of the mental health community.

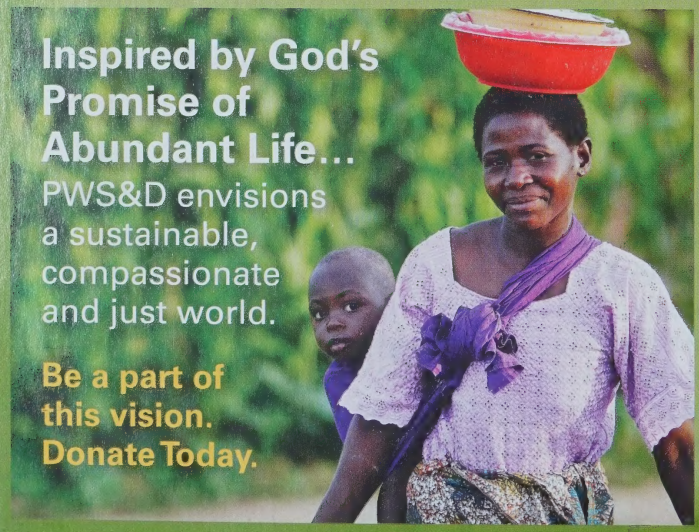
Recently, St. Andrew's Outreach Ministry gave financial support to an exciting new ministry, called

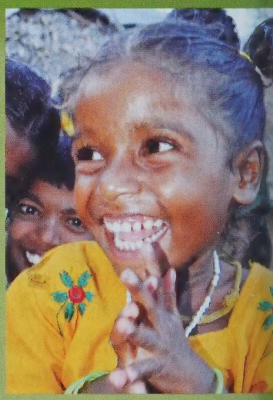
ARISE—Advocacy and Reclaiming those Involved in the Sex-trade through Empowerment. ARISE seeks to provide this empowerment by offering street outreach, case management, and pastoral care to those involved in the sex-trade in downtown Toronto. The Rev. Deb Rapport is the Community Chaplain and Director at ARISE, which is a mission of the Presbytery of East Toronto, and supported by The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

St. Andrew's has always had a tradition of helping others and today we continue to be called to serve in our downtown setting. We are surrounded by the towers of the financial district, hotels, theatres, concert halls, and new condos, but there are many on our streets who are homeless, hungry, lonely, and in need of community. Our congregation, drawn from across the city, represents the diversity of Toronto and is united by a common commitment to worship and to social action. This commitment is reflected in St. Andrew's mission statement: "The people of St. Andrew's are called by God to serve in faith, hope, and love in the core of Toronto."

Fiona Smith is an elder at St. Andrew's and Convener of the Outreach Ministry.

WE RESPOND


Inspired by God's Promise of Abundant Life...
PWS&D envisions a sustainable, compassionate and just world.
Be a part of this vision. Donate Today.



Presbyterian World Service & Development

50 Wynford Drive,
Toronto, ON M3C 1J7
1-800-619-7301 ext. 291
WeRespond.ca

How to Become an Advocate

by Colleen Wood

Advocacy is not just about changing you, but works to change the world. An effective advocate can bring about social, economic, political, and cultural changes. There is power in advocacy. Here are a few ways on how you can become an advocate:

1

Advocacy Starts with Knowledge

You don't need a PhD on the topic you wish to advocate on, but you should be interested enough in the topic to want to learn about it. If it is a topic of current public interest, perhaps you can begin by clipping news articles on the topic. Also, look to see if our church says anything about the topic. The Presbyterian Church in Canada updated its Social Action Handbook in 2014, and it covers a wide range of topics. It is well written and often gives additional information on the topic. (It can be downloaded from the website presbyterian.ca, or ordered on a CD.)

Be Political

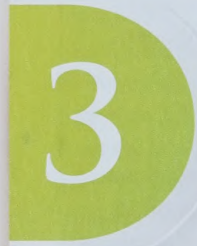
There are many ways you can be political. Although we can sometimes get disillusioned and frustrated with our democratic system, your vote still matters. Try to stay as informed as you can and use your vote wisely.

2

Also, be in touch with your local representatives. Did you know that you can invite your elected official to an event? If your church or WMS group is hosting an event on a social justice issue, invite your elected official and ask them to speak or answer questions. Give them as much notice as possible, and ample information about the event. Our local MP and MPP both attended our worship service on a Sunday when we were talking about mining in the Congo.

You can also meet with your local MP. Make an appointment, again giving as much information as possible regarding who would like to meet with your MP, and what it is regarding. Is it just you attending, or are you part of a small delegation? Try to be informed prior to the meeting, and be polite and professional. Ask them what they will do to move your topic ahead.

Finally, letter writing can help. I am a letter writer and have often, at the very least, felt my concerns were heard. And it helps to increase your knowledge, as you may receive ongoing communication on the topic from your elected official.

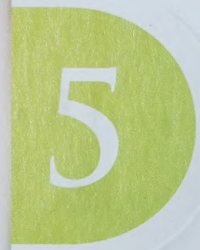


Join or Support a Group

Find others who are interested in the things that interest you and join together. This will increase your knowledge and encourage you in your efforts. The Presbyterian Church in Canada is a member of Kairos, an organization that unites eleven churches and religious organizations in faithful action for ecological justice and human rights. They have regional gatherings and might be a great place for you to find like-minded people. Also, talk to others in your congregation to see what groups might be functioning in your area.

Show Your Support

You might be surprised, but a button, bumper sticker, or T-shirt, can start a conversation. I have a few T-shirts with slogans, such as a Kairos T-shirt, and it has worked to start conversations on social justice issues at the gym.



Use the Media

I always read the editorials in my local newspaper. For me, I love to hear what others are advocating for in my own community. Writing letters does inform others. Short precise letters are best, and if there is something a little different, or news related, that is great too. Also, remember who you are writing for. If you are writing for your local paper, it is not likely to print a story on famine in Africa. However, if a local group you are involved in is doing something about the problem, or if you have family there and have an 'insiders' perspective, that might be more relevant. Also, in smaller communities, local papers are often quite willing to receive well-written articles. Look into your paper to see what is required.

6

Advocate with Your Money

There is a lot of information regarding the effectiveness of boycotts. It takes many people in a boycott to affect the financial bottom line of a large company. So, if you do decide to boycott, let the company know you are doing it through a letter to make it more effective. And, yes, some boycotts have been effective. Companies have removed harmful chemicals from their products, following boycotts. For example, in 2012, Johnson & Johnson reformulated all of its baby products to remove a formaldehyde-releasing preservative. Just know that it is generally the bigger, well-organized boycotts that have been most effective.

Buycotts can also be effective. The fair trade industry continues to grow and we are seeing more mainline companies adding more fair trade content to their products because that is what people have been demanding. The 'green' aisle at many grocery stores continues to grow as more and more people are choosing products that are organic or easier on the earth. Companies like Bridgehead and 10,000 Villages continue to sell products with a conscience, and the Fair Trade market at our 2014 Presbyterian Women's Gathering was very busy!

7

Consider Attending Demonstrations or Events

If you live in a large centre, there are often demonstrations that you can attend to help support advocacy issues. If you become involved in local organizations, you will likely learn of local protests, marches, and events. Attending peaceful demonstrations can be effective in showing support for an issue.

You can also consider hosting a prayer walk. For example, if you are concerned about those living in poverty, walk around your city and stop for quiet prayer in front of local shelters, food banks, and areas where the homeless gather.

8

Say 'Thank You'

If change happens, thank all of those who were involved in making that change happen.

DONATIONS

You Matter

by Erin Joy Whittaker

When I was in high school, my friend and I decided to hold a clothing drive for the mission where I was a volunteer. We stood in front of the 600 students at chapel and announced our project. We collected some clothes, mostly from the people I knew. A few years later, I asked my roommate's friends if they had any old clothes they would consider donating to the shelter I was working at, because we were really short on men's clothing. I collected pretty much the same amount of clothing from three guys as I had from my entire high school.

Most people don't think of an activist as someone who sits behind a desk and 'powers' through piles and piles of paper, or as someone who pours through policy looking at phrasing and commas. Perhaps when one of my required courses for social work was Administrative Skills for Social Work Practice, it should have given me a clue as to what my future would be like.

Yet every day that I am doing it, it is hard for me to imagine a life in which I wasn't helping people. Some of my very first memories are of spending time at Flora House, the Presbyterian mission where my dad worked. I loved to spend Sunday afternoons there, helping him with his children's programs and hanging out with the neighbourhood kids. I suppose most people can't say they grew up spending time with the homeless, drug users, and sex trade workers, but for me, that was normal. Studying social work seemed like the natural next step in my life as I set out to bring food to the hungry, hope to the broken hearted, and comfort to the weary. I worked night shifts at a local homeless shelter, rarely saw the sun, and bemoaned a society that left people outside, freezing, when the shelter reached its capacity. So I started talking about it, and while I may not spend my days at protest marches, chained to trees, or handing out leaflets, what I do is both important and vital.

I currently work for Manitoba Employment and Income Assistance (our provincial welfare program). Within our program I work with women, who have been exploited through the sex trade. I have always had a firm belief that the little things we do make a big difference in the lives of others, and this job gives me the chance to put that into action on a daily basis. With over 150 people on my caseload, I don't have time to spend hours and hours with each one of them. And that's okay. What is important is that when I bring someone into my office, they have my undivided attention, even if it is only for five minutes. For someone who is exploited, abused, homeless, addicted, and disenfranchised, having someone pay attention to them, and listen to them, even for a short period of time, can be extremely meaningful

and valuable. I refuse to give up on people, no matter how far down they feel they have sunk. I believe that there is hope for every single person to move forward and make positive changes, and I try to pass this hope along to those I work with. I help people stand up to oppression in their lives, advocating for them to others, and I work to empower them to go forward and advocate for themselves and those around them.

Outside my work, I also have had the opportunity to serve. Three years ago, I went on a Presbyterian Church in Canada mission and study tour to Malawi with others from my church. After I got back I wrote an article for *Glad Tidings* about how the trip didn't change my life, but noted that what it did was to give me a new story to tell. Three years later, I can tell you that the trip really did change my life and ignited my passion for overseas relief and development work. After my trip, I went and told my story to many of the congregations in Winnipeg. Because of my excitement and enthusiasm, I was nominated to be a member of the Presbyterian World Service & Development's National Committee. On this committee, I get a chance to be a part of the behind the scenes work that goes into our international relief and development efforts. Ever wonder how PWS&D decides where to work? We're the group that gets to figure it out. We're also the group of people who do fun things like revise the policy manual and create strategic plans. What we aren't, are the people on the ground implementing development programs and distributing aid.

It can be easy to get discouraged in the face of such huge issues. Global income inequality and the oppression of women will not be resolved overnight, but it's important that we stand up and acknowledge that things need to change. I like to think of my approach to activism as "relational activism" or "micro activism." It's one thing for me to be a social worker and a committee member, this in and of itself makes a huge difference, but I believe it is important to take things a step further, to make people aware of what the issues are and to shine a light on to some of the darkest parts of our world. It's uncomfortable for many people to hear. While I do speak at churches on a fairly regular basis, I find it is the one-on-one or small group conversations I have that tend to make the most difference.

I recently sat at a table with three men, all of whom backed up, slightly, when I mentioned the sex trade. Other people feel the need to defend themselves multiple times, when they ask me questions, because they don't want me to think that they want the information so they can go out and exploit someone. Relational activism is vital because a message often means more coming from someone you know. Relationship provides the

level of comfort people need in order to deal with uncomfortable topics, learn about them, and decide what actions need to be taken. Hearing a random person talk about the issue on a street corner would likely not have the same impact.

Relational activism is also vital because people are more likely to make changes to beliefs and attitudes based on the recommendations of someone they trust. The reason I gathered the same amount of clothes from three people as from 600 people is that the three people I asked knew me and trusted me. They knew that their donations would be going to 'real' people, who really needed them and not disappearing into a black hole. Reading an announcement, or hearing a radio advertisement, may not create the same level of response as in personal conversations.

Relational activism is not difficult to practise or be a part of; in fact, most of you are probably doing it already; it's natural to talk to the people around us about the things we feel passionate about. It is also natural to become passionate about the things our friends and family are passionate about. My two biggest passions are working to stop the exploitation of women through the sex trade and the work of Presbyterian World Service and Development, and everybody who knows me, knows that. As you read about the different social justice issues in this issue of *Glad Tidings* I encourage you to think about the things you are passionate about, who you can share your passion with, and what you can do to take action. Even a single conversation or a small action can end up making a big difference in the long run. You matter!

Photo: PWS&D

My two biggest passions are working to stop the exploitation of women through the sex trade and the work of Presbyterian World Service & Development, and everybody who knows me, knows that.

By Colleen Wood

So, you survived the commercialism of Christmas, and found time to celebrate Christ's birth. But now, you are faced with the challenge of Easter. Easter makes Christmas looks easy. We are comfortable with babies being born, but adults being killed, that's not something we talk about everyday! But as parents, grandparents, and family friends, we have a responsibility to teach this to our children.

Just like Advent prepared us for Christmas, Lent can help to prepare us for Easter. Take some time during the season of Lent to:

- Read Bible stories about Jesus' ministry
- Plant seeds inside and watch the miracle of new life
- Purchase a Lenten family devotional or calendar
- Bake pretzels—their folded shapes remind us of arms folded in prayer
- Make a prayer wall using sticky notes, and pray these prayers together as a family.

As Holy week, arrives, try to find time to attend church, beginning with Palm Sunday. And, anytime you talk about the death of Jesus with children, don't leave out the good news—Jesus' resurrection. Never assume children have heard the whole story, or remember it, so always end your story with the fact that Jesus is alive.

On Good Friday consider:

- Eating Hot Cross Buns. The cross of icing reminds us of Jesus' death.

- Make a cross. For young children, have them cut it out and colour it, or decorate it with tissue paper. For older children, they can build one out of wood (sticks from outside make a great cross), or make a cross necklace.[i]
- Plant an Easter garden using a flower pot and sticks for the crosses.[ii]

Easter morning can still include an Easter Egg Hunt. Talk to your children about why Easter includes bunnies, chicks, and eggs. They represent new life, and because Jesus died and came back to life, we have new life in Jesus.

You can also:

- Light a candle to remind us that Jesus, the light of the world, is alive and with us!
- Bake and eat resurrection cookies or rolls. These cookies and rolls are 'empty.'[iii]
- Visit a farm and see all the new baby animals, again a reminder of new life.
- Take a hike and look for signs of new life.
- Decorate and hang butterflies around your home to remind you that Jesus came back to life.
- Watch a video or read a book to your children.

There are some great children's books and videos that you can share with your children:

- The Berenstain Bears' Easter Parade
- God Gave Us Easter by Lisa Tawn Bergren
- The Parable of The Lily by Liz Higgs
- Veggie Tales: An Easter Carol DVD

And obviously, don't forget to read the Easter story from an age appropriate children's Bible!

What likely scares us most about talking about Easter with our children is the question, "Why did Jesus have to die?" or, "Why did people kill Jesus." Talking about this with children is hard, but children also have a sense of 'good' guys and 'bad' guys. You can say that the bad guys (Judas, Pilate) had Jesus killed and they thought they had won. But, they didn't. You can even remind the children, that God loves everyone—even the bad guys and that he died for them too. Jesus coming back to life reminds us that God is more powerful than evil, more powerful than the bad guys. God won!

[i] An easy cross necklace with beads can be found at http://re-inventedstyle.blogspot.ca/2011/12/re-crafting-christmas-cross-craft-for.html. A nail cross, for older children, can be found at http://inmyownlittlecorner-angie.blogspot.ca/2013/02/nail-cross-necklace.html.

[ii] http://velvetonthepage.blogspot.ca/2012/03/plant-easter-garden.html

[iii] For a recipe to follow search online. I found both at http://kitchenandkids.com/2013/03/19/teachable-moments-resurrection-cookies-and-resurrection-rolls/.

He Has Given

Call to Worship:

Leader: You, O Lord are the portion of my inheritance and my cup.

People: You maintain my cup.

Leader: The lines have fallen to me in a pleasant place.

People: Yes, I have a good inheritance.

Hymn: # 247 Christ the Lord is risen today

Opening prayer:

Dear God forgive us when our thoughts, our actions, and even our words draw us away from you. Forgive our absence from holy things in the face of Kingdom needs. Forgive us when we fail to follow the lead of the Spirit.

Grant that in our worship we bring our hearts to give you a steadfast love, our minds and thoughts to bless and lift up your name. May your strength and light be in us as we follow your purpose for us within your creation. We pray this prayer in the precious name of our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

FOLLOW

Me

Us Enough

by Barney Grace

EASTER WORSHIP

Hymn: # 349 My hope is built on nothing less

He Has Given Us Enough

(Leader's Note: Have a table at the front or in the centre of your worship space.)

Read: Luke 24:1–5
Action: A white folded napkin is laid out.

The question from Luke's Gospel awakens us. "Why do you look for the living among the dead?"

We serve a living Christ. Let us look at the benefits of Easter by walking in the sandals of the disciples on their first encounter with Jesus. We will then travel with them to the Cross and beyond the tomb.

Read: Matthew 4:18–22
Action: A small fishing net or a picture of fishermen can be displayed.

The disciples were a discouraged lot following the crucifixion of Jesus. They were entering the second trying period of their journey with

Jesus. The first testing came to them in their various occupations when Jesus invited them to become "fishers of men," and He said, "Follow Me."

In a few short hours, they had to examine the values in their lives, and they then had to make a decision on whether or not to follow Jesus—a personal decision that had to be made on their own. Fishermen left their nets. A public official resigned his post. They became followers of Jesus.

That was their first great crisis and they came through it.

Suppose, Jesus were to walk into this room today and ask each of you to follow Him. How much soul searching would it take for you to leave everything behind and follow Jesus?

Read: Luke 23:44–46
Action: Display a cross and/or crown of thorns.

The disciples' second testing came at the Crucifixion. The disciples were after all, only human, so we must allow them some leeway. They would have no doubt handled things differently if they had been attacked on an open road between Jerusalem and Jericho. Then they would have probably fought to their death in a roadside fight to protect Jesus.

It is always easier to be brave in action, in the spur of a moment. But when the battleground is in the mind and heart, the use of force is useless and it is then that character is demanded. These men were not cowards; they were human beings who gave way to unexpected pressure and influence.

Read: Luke 24:13–16
Action: Display a picture of a dusty road or a man's sandal.

Now the Disciples, having lost hope, would embark on the third great crisis of their lives.

The two men walking on the road to Emmaus did not recognize Jesus. Little did the disciples know that they were going to enter upon the most fruitful period of their lives.

Read: Luke 22:19–20
Action: Place a loaf of bread and a cup on the table.

What did Jesus bring them? He brought the assurance that the power of the Risen Lord would be found in simple ways, in ordinary life. They needed no great service. No specially appointed priest or unusual setting where needed to find the Risen Lord. He was known to them in the breaking of bread. *"Do this in remembrance of Me."* (The loaf may be picked up for effect.)

All of the appearances of Jesus after the resurrection were of the simplest nature. No great conversations, no parables, no miracles—just quiet talk. A humble time with two men who travelled from Emmaus; a breakfast of fish and honey by the lake; a reminder that they were witnesses of things they had seen and heard; a talk with Thomas to remove doubts; and a commission to go into the world and preach the Gospel.

Jesus set up no hierarchy, formulated no external tests for believers, established no rituals, created no systems, and there were no bitter words for those who had mistreated Him.

Read: Matthew 24:35
Action: Nothing is added to the table.

The words of Jesus have spoken to us down through the years to this very hour. Jesus taught that religion was an everyday necessity which gave quality to work and home, to eating and drinking, to thought and play alike. He brings assurance that eternal life and friendship with the Risen Lord would be found in the ordinary routine of each passing day. He gives us knowledge that we have enough to live by.

He said unto them: *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away."* There were many subjects He never touched on at this time. He never gave clear teachings about war or slavery, or many of the present day problems dealing with industry and a digital world, or with the moral bar of society ever being lowered, or for greed, for which we would like one simple command.

But like the disciples, we have enough. If with what we have, we give ourselves to working out our problems, we have enough by which to walk and to work towards a world of peace.

Read: John 1:14
Action: Add a Bible to the table.

We have enough. He was the Word made flesh and they had heard the Word on many occasions as have we. Jesus gave these discouraged men, through His life and resurrection, the knowledge that they had already seen enough and experienced enough of the divine life to live it.

The gift of Easter is the reassurance of immortality. Our hearts should pound as we recognize in Him a pledge of victory over death. For three days, Christ had been lost from His disciples in a grave, but Easter brought Him back stronger and more alive than ever. Jesus indeed conquered death.

Closing Prayer:

Leader: Heavenly Father we come into your presence giving you thanks for all of the blessings that flow from you. We thank you that you loved us so much that you sent your only Son into the world not to harm the world, but to save the world.

People: In our prayers of petition, we hold up to you all who are laid aside with sickness, all who are in search of employment, all who are mourning the loss of a loved one or friend. Gracious God, we bring to your altar those who need a lift up as they struggle for their daily bread. We hold up to You, all the many families that are in a state of not living a life that bears fruit and gives glory to You.

Leader: Almighty God, as we celebrate this time of Easter, we give you our most humble thanks for the tomorrow you have given your people. May the Spirit continue to work in the Church of Jesus Christ giving life and direction to all who come through the doors in search of hope.

All: **Help us to spread the love of Jesus to an unsettled world that so needs to experience the peace of Jesus Christ. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Hymn: # 243 Jesus Christ is risen today

Benediction:

May the gift of Easter, the hope of Easter and the excitement surrounding the miracle of Easter be a part of our every day life as we realize that in Jesus we have enough. Hear us, we pray, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Just in time for Easter, a great new resource is available from Tori Smit, Regional Staff for the Synod of Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda. She has prepared a Lenten and Easter Family Devotional Booklet that is written for families to use daily; sharing scripture, prayers, conversation, and activities while also sharing their family meal. Download it for free at: http://www.cnob.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Lent_Easter-family-devotion-booklet.pdf

CELEBRATING EARTH DAY

April 22, 2015

Justice Ministries

"See! The winter is past; the rains are over and gone. Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come."

(NIV Song of Songs 2:11-12a)

How many days go by when we are too busy to "See!" the beauty that God has placed all around us? How many hours do we spend distracted by our daily routines and responsibilities so that we do not hear a single note in the "season of singing"?

God, our Creator, has gifted us with sights and sounds, tastes and smells that are sumptuous, rich—unique reflections of God's care for us. We are part of God's beautiful garden. Our response is thankfulness, a commitment to treasure such exquisite gifts and to protect the delicate web of life on Earth from degradation, pollution and climate change.

"The season of singing" has arrived once again, and we are reminded of the need to protect this sacred gift, our planet. Let us rejoice and be glad in it! We are caretakers of creation.

Michelle Verwey, India

Warm greetings! I am writing this from my desk at 50 Wynford Drive in January, when 2015 is still a new year. Appointed as a mission staff person by International Ministries (supported by Presbyterians Sharing), I am embarking on this new year in a newer model for mission with long-standing mission partners in India—the Church of North India (CNI) and the Mid India Board of Educators (MIBE) Graduate School for Nurses.

Many of you are familiar with CNI's work, particularly in the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh. This is where the Central Regional Board of Health Services (CRBHS) of the CNI is running the PWS&D supported Community Health and Self Reliance Program. The program is currently serving 27 villages in three districts in south-western Madhya Pradesh—Barwani, Dewas (out of the town of Hatpiplia), and Ratlam.

The program's goal is to increase community self-reliance and enhance food security of vulnerable families in 27 villages in Madhya Pradesh. To meet this goal, the program runs health and livelihood activities. These include health camps, school health, water and sanitation hygiene activities, agricultural training, animal husbandry and veterinary camps, soil and water conservation activities, and establishment and training of community-based organizations.

The MIBE Graduate School for Nurses is located in Indore, Madhya Pradesh. It runs a post-basic BSc nursing program for General Nurse Midwives, who are training to become degree nurses. Once graduated, these nurses will become senior nursing staff, nurse educators, and nursing leaders.

Under this newer model for mission, I will work in India in one-month stretches each quarter, and for the remainder of the year, I will be working from Canada. When in

India, my work will be intensively hands-on; whereas, during the time in Canada, I will work predominantly on the administration and planning side of things. This model allows for my Indian colleagues to learn or refine skill-sets while we work side-by-side, and to apply these skills with more independence when I am at a distance.

Please join me in praying for Christ to foster a spirit of knowledge-sharing, independence, and resilience this year. Like the community program's goal, may there be increased self-reliance and sustainability for our partners. And like the Graduate School for Nurses, may our partners produce more leaders among their staff.

Back at my desk at 50 Wynford, I am presently working on monitoring and evaluation schedules, planning for the reopening of the community program in a fourth district, and lesson plans. The end of another year for the community program is March 31, which means annual reporting is drawing near. The monitoring and evaluation schedules will assist us to capture the progress being made in the villages.

Please pray with us for progress and improvements in the lives of the target populations. May we enhance our capacity in tracking and communicating the program's progress.

The CRBHS Community Health and Self Reliance Program hopes to reopen the program in Alirajpur district, out of the village of Mendha. The Mendha and Jobat community health programs have been closed for two years. Through the efforts of many individuals, there is hope that Mendha will be the centre of activities for six villages in the community program as soon as April 1.

Please join in prayer with CRBHS, the congregations, and community members of the area for Christ's hand to guide the planning efforts; draw experienced individuals to the program to become the much needed staff; and bring vibrant renewal to the area.

During February and March, I will be in India. Along with the whirlwind of annual reporting preparations and planning for the reopening of Mendha, I will be teaching community health classes and running a three-day workshop. The workshop is on basic epidemiological measures and public health indicators. In plainer English—how to accurately measure disease and health-related events. This is an essential skill for public health nurses and anyone in health and development. The workshop will be for second year students from the MIBE Graduate School for Nurses, project officers, program coordinators from the community health program, and MSc nursing students from across Indore.

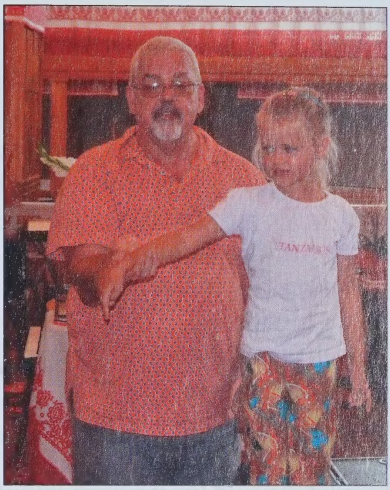
Please pray for the workshop to be highly attended, the practical

sessions in the workshop to be engaging, and stamina for me as I teach in an intensive format.

From my desk at 50 Wynford, I send you all my well wishes and blessings for 2015. May this year's new endeavors be fruitful for each one of us.

Brian Johnston, Romania
Annual Report

The year started well for me with the traditional welcoming in the New Year service in a village close to Cluj-Napoca. The service was unique in that it was ecumenical and bilingual combining the local Hungarian Reformed congregation with the Romanian Orthodox. There is also a special week of prayer held every January and many congregations invite a guest preacher each evening often from a different denomination,



either Roman Catholic, Unitarian, or Lutheran.

During January, we have our exam period. The second year students had to write a paper describing their Christmas student service and to discuss it as part of their English

Camp staff in Ukraine

oral exam. The students often have to preach as many as five times as Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost are three-day festivals here. It is good experience for them in that they get to serve in three different congregations in one academic year. As well, the first year students often help their home congregations during the holiday services.

Each year, the level of the English students seems to become more varied and I am grateful that I am able to involve advanced students in assisting me with the beginner groups. In June, two students were presented with an award for their outstanding achievement.

At the end of June, I was asked to be musical director in a special English camp held in Nagy Bereg, Ukraine. I was very pleased to work directly with my colleagues David and Anna Pandy who are also employed by International Ministries. The camp was extremely well organized having 117 participants. One of the local pastors commented, "It is such a huge spiritual support for us that The Presbyterian Church in Canada is so involved here in Ukraine when many countries in the world are turning their backs." I also assisted in many camps throughout Romania in July/August in teaching English through musical activities and in conversation groups for the older ones.

In September, I resumed my English teaching in Zsobok, a small village about one hour from Cluj. I go there every Wednesday afternoon to teach three groups from ages 8 through 14. The students are a mixture of those from the village and the orphanage where I have had a long established relationship.

The choir continued to develop well and participated in a variety of

Grade 11 camp in Ukraine

worthwhile events. In May, we performed in a regional festival involving choirs from all over Transylvania. In November, we held a special autumn concert which involved four young ladies from a local string quartet and for our Advent concert, I invited a famous Romanian children's choir which complemented very well my male chorus. These special events are possible through donations to Gifts of Change. (Share the Gift of Music in Romania)

At the beginning of June, I was fortunate to be able to attend the PCC General Assembly at Wilfred Laurier University in Waterloo. This was actually during my study leave and I was able to benefit greatly from the variety of special worship services that I witnessed. I was able to participate in the opening one as well. I was also in Canada for the Christmas season and was organist at my home church at Knox Presbyterian in Waterloo, whose members continue to support me so very much.

I wish to thank International Ministries for their ongoing support and encouragement. I am very proud to be on their staff, working in Romania through the partnership with the Hungarian Reformed Church in Eastern Europe. A special thanks also to the many Canadian Presbyterians who continue to support me and others through *Presbyterians Sharing*.

Overseas Staff Birthdays

April

17 – Peter Daniel Pandy-Szekeres, Hungary

Romanian Children's Choir

WMS ... Did You Know?

Mission Awareness Sunday is fast approaching. Many groups will be celebrating this special Sunday with their congregation on April 26, 2015, though we always encourage you to find the most suitable Sunday for your group. It is one of the ways we promote mission in congregations and live out the WMS purpose.

As Mission Awareness Sunday draws near, we encourage you to take some time in personal prayer (or community prayer). We know WMS is involved in many projects. Some are national such as our Together We Can! initiatives or the mission studies in Glad Tidings. Others we learn about through personal testimonies as WMS members reach out close to home and around the world.

We encourage you to pray for all these projects. Here are a few prayer requests:

Social Justice

All humans are equal and we need to work towards creating an egalitarian society.

When we fight for social justice we must look after the least advantaged members of society and make sure everyone has equal access to liberties, rights, and opportunities. Our understanding of social justice flows from our understanding of God's love for all people and is based on the life and words of Jesus Christ.

God, help me and those around the world to recognize that all people are equal. May your desire for justice inspire your followers to fight for those treated unjustly around the world. Open our eyes to those in need around us. May we be reminded to demonstrate your love and live our life as Jesus taught us. Amen.

Human Trafficking

Human Trafficking is a form of slavery. It is the sale and purchase of human beings for exploitation. It is always involuntary. It is achieved through fraud, deception, abduction, or abuse of power. Women and children are the majority of those trafficked for the sex trade.

God, you protect us. Today we pray for the many women, children, and men being trafficked internationally. We know you are with them; give them strength and a way out. Also lend your strength to the survivors of human trafficking. Help them to work towards restoration and healing.

We pray for our international leaders. Please guide them so they will act, work against corruption, and enforce laws so we can bring a stop to human trafficking. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Maternal Health in Malawi and Afghanistan

Motherhood is a fulfilling experience for many women, but it can also provide its share of suffering and heartbreak. Each year in developing countries, hundreds of thousands of women die from complications during pregnancy and nine million children do not live past their fifth birthday. This is due to a lack of access to health services, minimal family planning, and inadequate nutrition during pregnancy, combined with low awareness of maternal health issues.

God, you have taught us that every life is precious. We pray for the health of all pregnant women, unborn children, and newborns. May your love for us inspire many to work for better healthcare worldwide—providing better facilities and helping educate communities, families, pregnant women, and new mothers about maternal health issues. May your grace help build strong families. Amen.

Ministry with Aboriginal Peoples in Canada

The history of the relationship between Aboriginal People and The Presbyterian Church in Canada has been complex and often difficult. In 1994, The Presbyterian Church in Canada confessed its role in the tragic legacy of the Indian Residential Schools. The church is committed to walking with Aboriginal Peoples on a journey toward reconciliation and living out the spirit of the confession.

Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry provides a warm and safe place where people in inner-city Saskatoon can gather for food, friendship, and support.

The Nazko and Area Dakelh Outreach is part of the mission work of Cariboo Presbyterian Church in the Dakelh First Nation territory, BC. They minister through house church fellowship and Bible studies.

Reconciling God, we see your strength and your grace in those who minister with our Aboriginal People in Canada. May the lives of all involved in our ministry with Aboriginal Peoples be enriched in ways that are truly pleasing to you. We pray also, that we are guided by your love and filled with respect and understanding. Help us to continue this journey of confession and healing together. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Inner-City Ministry

Within Canada, there is a great need to reach out and provide advocacy, companionship, food, health care, and shelter to individuals and families. This is done nationally and also by many congregations and WMS groups. Many of these ministries are centrally located in urban areas.

Loving God, we pray for the children's ministries in our various inner-city ministries and congregations across Canada. We pray for after-school programs for children and youth that help these individuals gain confidence, develop self-esteem, and improve their scholastic work. May the help they receive now, have a lasting impact on their lives.

We pray for ministries that reach out to new immigrants. May these ministries help new immigrants to develop a sense of home in Canada and help familiarize them to the Canadian culture, systems, and language as they adjust to a new life in a strange land.

We pray for our ministries that walk with the lonely. May they continue to share your love. Strengthen those involved in these ministries as staff and volunteers.

Finally, we pray that adequate funding and support will be available to continue these inner-city ministries. May we be generous in reaching out to our neighbours with our finances, our buildings, and our time. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

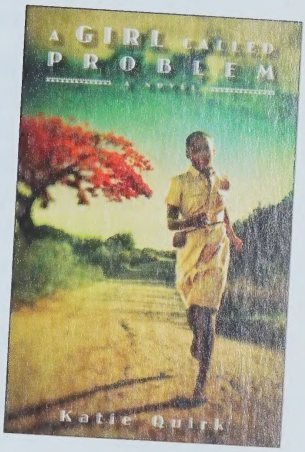
CGIT is 100 years young in 2015!

What an amazing accomplishment. To celebrate, we are calling all girls, leaders, alumnae, or anyone who has been associated with CGIT to come and celebrate with us. Get reacquainted with old friends and make some new ones. Relive some wonderful memories.

For those in Ontario, join us at our 100th Anniversary Celebrations at Crieff Hills from May 29–31, 2015. Mark this on your calendars, send in your registration, and join us to Cherish Health, Seek Truth, Know God & Serve Others!

We also want to record some of our legacy for all to read. Share your favourite CGIT memories with us. To share your experience or for more information:

Ontario CGIT Association
Address: PO Box 371 Norwich ON N0J 1P0
Email: ontario@cgit.ca



A Girl Called Problem
by Katie Quirk
reviewed by Colleen Wood

I received this book quite a while back and always wanted to get around to reading it and reviewing it. Although this book is aimed at young adults, it seemed like it could also appeal to an adult audience and I certainly enjoyed it.

The story is set in Tanzania and follows Shida, a 13-year-old girl, growing up in rural village with few opportunities. Although her name means 'problem,' her mother is thought to be a witch, and her father is dead, she is still a very positive young woman. She becomes even more excited at the prospect that their entire village is going to move. In their new town of Nija Panda, she will be able to attend school.

Once they arrive in the new community, things seem to go continually wrong for the villagers that have moved. Mysterious things begin to happen. Some think it is because their ancestors are angry that they moved? Is it a curse or can Shida figure out the truth of what is happening in their new home. Shida shows her strength throughout this novel, even when she is persecuted by the boys, and even a teacher, for wanting an education.

I would suggest this book for young adults, particularly girls. I think this could be read with children as young as nine or ten, or given to a child aged twelve to sixteen to read on their own. Shida is a great example of a girl who has a dream, a dream that seems almost impossible. She works hard and doesn't give up. The book also exposes young adults to another culture and time period taking place in Tanzania in 1960s. The back of the book even contains a glossary with pictures to further their understanding.

Although this book does not have any specific Christian content, I do think it is informative for those who are interested in the world and mission work. I also think this would be a great book to read with your child or grandchild, which would allow you to talk to them about your mission interest.

What are you reading? If you have read a book that would appeal to a Christian audience, consider writing a book review for *Glad Tidings*. Book reviews are generally 250–400 words in length and can be emailed to Gladtidings@presbyterian.ca.

In the Society

Presbyterial

Huron-Perth Presbyterial held their annual meeting at Knox Presbyterian Church, Listowel, on Monday January 19. The theme for the day was, God Planted a Garden.

President Mary Duffin opened the meeting with prayer, followed by the welcome from Knox minister, the Rev. Don McCallum, and words of welcome from Marsha Hamilton, President of the Bessie MacMurchy WMS, Listowel.

After All Things Bright and Beautiful was sung, Mary Duffin gave the meditation on the theme using verses from Genesis 2. She stated that it was not too early to start thinking about planting your garden. The WMS Purpose was repeated in unison followed by the minutes of the 2014 Annual Meeting. Then, the committees gave their yearly reports consisting of what each WMS group had accomplished in 2014.

The Nominations Report was presented and Shirley Aitcheson installed the 2015 executive. Knox North Easthope WMS led the In Memoriam, remembering our members who passed away during the year.

Wallace WMS led the Devotions on the New Year and Guidance. The Rev. Dorothy Henderson from Exeter was our afternoon speaker on the theme, Soup, Soil, and Sacrament. Mitchell WMS gave the courtesies, and we closed with prayer and singing, We Plough the Fields and Scatter.

Niagara Presbyterial annual general meeting.

Niagara Presbyterial held their Annual General Meeting at Scottlea Presbyterian Church in St. Catharines on January 28 with the theme, Facing Change at the Grass Roots. On this cold sunny morning, we were thankful to be welcomed with coffee, tea, and sweet treats.

After a hymn sing, President Nancy Wehrmann welcomed the group and the Rev. Martin Wehrmann led the worship service with Communion. He spoke about Christian unity, Jesus' baptism, and Epiphany, leading to God's offer of grace to all.

Our guest speaker, the Rev. Wally Hong, led us in a brief history of the early WMS when women helped local people, who were struggling in Quebec and Ontario. Then came overseas work, which changed when the mission work of the whole church became centralized. Groups worked alone or shared their work together. We were asked to consider, who are our neighbours outside our churches? Do we really know them? This is the challenge for the future.

The Memorial service was led by the Niagara group and Marilyn Leslie presented the Honourary President's award to Betty Crogie for her long years of service in the WMS. After the installation of officers, the group enjoyed a fine lunch prepared by the host church. Bill Wylie, Moderator of Presbytery, brought greetings from the Presbytery and Debbie Kallender represented the Synodical.

East Toronto Presbyterial met at Knox Presbyterian Church, Agincourt, on November 22. Former missionaries, Diana Wadsworth and Priscilla Anderson, gave some insight into how Christmas was celebrated in India and Japan, where Christians are a minority.

Diana returned to Canada in 1996 after 37 years as a teacher/manager at the Helen MacDonald Memorial School in Jhansi. As India is mostly a Hindu country, Christmas was not celebrated except in the Christian communities. The schools were closed for one day only on December 25, but being a Christian school, all students and staff were given a one-week holiday, so the boarding students were

East Toronto Presbyterial meeting.

able to visit their families.

The church youth witnessed to the non-Christian community by driving an open truck through the town with youth dressed up as a living diorama while telling the story of Christ's birth on loudspeakers. The women's groups sang carols door to door and the school girls dramatized the Christmas story. One year, they had a sound- and light show outdoors. The church sanctuary was decorated with many-coloured streamers and everyone wore their best new clothes! Church women served Christmas cake after the Christmas Day service.

Priscilla and Bob and their children arrived in Tokyo in August 1966 and from September to November were involved in language study. Their first Christmas was difficult as they were adjusting to a new country, language, and customs. Finding a Christmas tree made them feel more at home.

Christmas was not a big celebration in Japan—the emphasis being on New Year's when the stores closed from January 1 to 5 and gifts were given. At the evening church service the Christmas story was told, either with a pageant or on flannelgraph. Women sat on one side and the men on the other. Afterwards, they sang carols in the neighbourhood until 4:00 a.m., as they were often invited inside for food and beverages. Altogether, Bob and Priscilla served 16 years in Japan.

Following the mission speakers, Priscilla Anderson led in the Recognition Service of Closure for two groups that disbanded during 2014 and gave thanks for the faithful service of the women of the WMS.

The Semper Fidelis (mean *ever faithful*) group of Knox, Agincourt, was organized in February 1929 as a Young Women's Auxiliary of the WMS and they recently celebrated their 85th Anniversary. They have always been faithful to the work of the WMS but a number of the women are second generation, and because of their dwindling numbers they felt it was better to close now than die out.

The group at Trinity York Mills was instigated by Noreen Marshall and recently celebrated its 50th year. They are in transition and are finding ways to attract younger women to carry on the program and support the mission work.

Barrie WMS Presbyterial sponsored A Day Apart on Oct 18 at Essa Road Presbyterian Church. Our theme for the day was, What's on Your Bucket List?

Our president, Mary Veale-Parker, and Essa Road WMS president, June Campbell, welcomed all. Aileen Wallace led devotions based on the theme, The Light of the World.

Tori Smit was the day's workshop leader. She used clips from the movie, *The Bucket List,* and the book, *Ten Fun Things to do Before You Die*, by

Karol A. Jackowski. In small groups, we discussed what was on our bucket list, when we had the most fun, and who is our best self.

After a delicious soup-sandwich lunch, Tori led a Bible study on Job. Group discussions followed and ended with us writing a limerick about Job. To conclude, Tori suggested, according to Matthew 5:13, we should become really interesting people. She also challenged us to write a memoir about ourselves in six words.

Carolyn Woodrow thanked Tori, and the day ended with the Rev. Martyn Van Essen conducting Communion.

Upcoming Exposure Tour: Guatemala

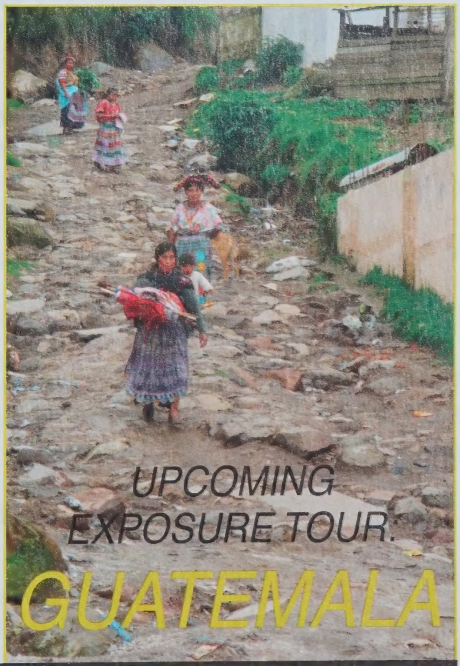
Date: October 1–10 (tentative)

Cost: $2000 (inclusive of airfare, accommodation, meals, road travel)

WMS Council Executive has approved a WMS Exposure Tour to Guatemala for Fall 2015. The Presbyterian Church in Canada has been walking with the Maya people of Guatemala for many years, and continues to partner with them. The distribution of wealth in Guatemala is unequal and the Maya people are among the poorest in the country.

Within Guatemala, the Women's Missionary Society has an ongoing relationship partnering with the Aboriginal Maya women. Over the years we have provided resources to assist with Bible studies, educational workshops, literacy programs, micro-loans, and health training.

This Fall, come and see the mission work that is happening in Guatemala and meet our mission partners. You must be in good health and able to walk rough terrain without the use of an aid because much of the travel will be in mountainous areas. For more information on this trip, contact the WMS office.



proVisionaries

Planting seeds of hope.
For generations to come.

2015: The Year of the Gift Annuity

The 2014 General Assembly passed the following recommendation:

> *That every congregation be encouraged to invite their members and adherents who are sixty years of age and older to consider acquiring a gift annuity, thereby providing guaranteed tax-free annual income for the rest of their lives and a significant legacy for the future of the church.*

Joanne Instance, who served as President of the WMS from 2001–04, is a great example of the benefits of gift annuities for both the donor and the church. On May 23, 2014, Joanne passed away in Winnipeg just days after attending the 100th Anniversary Celebration for the WMS and the National Women's Gathering with her daughter Carole. (Both pictured above, along with granddaughter Kella.)

In 2006, Joanne acquired a $15,000 gift annuity through the PCC, naming *Presbyterians Sharing*, PWS&D and the WMS as beneficiaries. In exchange for her gift, she received:

- a one-time tax receipt of $3,346
- guaranteed annual payments of $903.90 (84% tax-free) for a total of $6,607 during her lifetime
- plus she left a legacy of $12,334 for the church after she passed away.

Through her foresight and generosity, Joanne continues to give to the church she loved. To learn how you can become part of the future while earning tax-free income today, contact Sheryl Sutton in the Planned Giving Office.

What will your legacy be?

The Presbyterian Church in Canada
50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, ON M3C 1J7
ssutton@presbyterian.ca • 1-800-619-7301 ext. 265
presbyterian.ca/pg

The above example is for illustrative purposes only. Gift annuity rates are subject to change.

Resignation Announcement of Ken Kim, Director of PWS&D

The Life and Mission Agency and the Presbyterian World Service & Development Committee sincerely regret to announce the resignation of Ken Kim as Director of PWS&D. In his letter of resignation, Ken stated, "It has been an incredible privilege and honour to serve as the Director of Presbyterian World Service & Development since August 2006." Ken will leave office as of March 15, 2015, to assume the role of Disaster Response Leader at World Renew (the relief and development agency of the Christian Reformed Church of North America), which includes the responsibility of being Director of International Disaster Response.

In his letter of resignation, Ken also said, "The success of the PWS&D team should be credited to the leadership of the committee, the support of the constituency, and the unfailing commitment of its staff." He added that he will miss being with the staff of one of the hardest working teams.

The PWS&D Committee is saddened by this loss but they recognize the gifts and talents of Ken and certainly wish him well in this new challenge. They have especially appreciated Ken's ability to express his faith as a part of what

Photo: PWS&D

he did, why he did it, and his ability to bring the development world and the church world together. The Life and Mission Agency will lose a valued associate secretary, who has sustained a very challenging portfolio over the last eight and a half years. PWS&D has an enviable reputation in the development and emergency relief and refugee spheres. It is highly regarded in the Presbyterian Church and Ken has done a great deal to raise PWS&D's prominence and profile. The national church will miss his dedication, talent, and faithfulness to our denomination. We wish him all the best in his future endeavours as he continues to serve in the greater Christian church. We all join in praying God's richest blessings on Ken and his family as he makes this transition.

(From Presbyterian.ca)

continued on page 46

Dave Phillips Retires

After three and a half years, Dave Phillips retires from his position as Healing and Reconciliation Program Animator with The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

The challenge is and will continue to be education: our church and our country must be better educated about the history of residential schools and its effects today. This education will allow us to journey together, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, as equals. As we journey together we will gain a better understanding of each other, continue to heal hurt and brokenness, and work for reconciled relationships that bring mutual understanding of each other. My prayer is that as we work together that the love of God will permeate every person, fueling a desire to continue on this journey towards reconciliation.

Dave Phillips says, "It has been an interesting time in the history of Canada and our Aboriginal people. As I took on the position of Healing and Reconciliation Animator, I knew this work would be a challenge. This is the main reason I agreed to serve in this position."

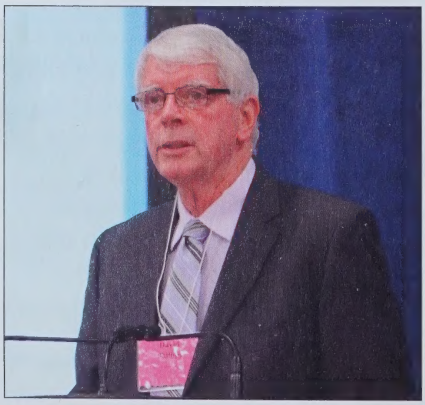


Photo: PCC Communication

Recognition Service for ARISE Ministry

ARISE Ministry (advocacy & reclaiming those Involved in the Sex-trade through Empowerment) is a new mission in the Presbytery of East Toronto that offers outreach, case management, and pastoral care to individuals involved in the sex-trade. On January 31, the Presbytery of East Toronto held a Service of Recognition for the Appointment of the Rev. Deb Rapport as Community Chaplain and Director of ARISE Ministry. This marks the expansion of the role from a ⅓ time ministry position to a half-time position, and we pray the ministry will continue to grow.

The Rev. Jen Sokolowsky welcomed everyone to the Service and led the liturgy. The Rev. Dr. Stephen Farris, Moderator of the 140th General Assembly, brought greetings not only from the Assembly, but from Vancouver School of Theology, St. Andrew's Hall, and Kerrisdale Presbyterian Church where Rev. Rapport was taught and nurtured as a seminary student. Then the Rev. Hugh Donnelly sang, The Stranger, a song about welcoming with love the stranger and outcast into our churches and into our hearts.

Beth Nickel
Jean Stokes
Jean Thompson
Belmore WMS,
Belmore ON

Betty Saunders
St Andrews WMS,
Bolsover ON

Fay Feunekes
Sarah Dunning Auxiliary,
Knox, Dundas ON

Mary McKellar
Burns Mosa Presbyterian,
Glencoe ON

Marjorie Claus
Ruth Gerry
Arthur Circle WMS,
Knox, Goderich ON

Sandra Jean Wilkinson
St. Andrew's WMS,
Guelph ON
(formerly St. Paul's,
Brampton ON)

Donna Wilson
WMS St. John and St.
Andrew, Hamilton ON

Cornelia (Corrie)
Hendrika de Vries
Kamloops BC

Morag Thompson
St. Andrew's WMS,
Kitchener ON

Agnew Lyons
Euphemia Cameron
Lucknow Presbyterian,
Lucknow ON

Doris Rock
Ripley ON

Noreen Anderson
Caroline Andrews
Dora Codd
Audrey Lee
St. Andrew's Presbyterian
Women, Scarborough ON

Ardonna LeGrand
Knox, Teeswater ON

Ruby (Gordon) Brown
MacLennan Auxiliary
WMS, Knox,
Tiverton ON

Anne Mawson
Fairview Presbyterian
Church, Vancouver BC

The Rev. Dr. Karen Bach preached on Jesus' call to be salt and light in the world; the preciousness and rarity of salt and light for Jesus' audience and how we must be salt and light in the face of injustices in our world. Finally, the Rev. Dr. Harris Athanasiadis, Moderator of East Toronto Presbytery, and the Rev. Ian McDonald, Clerk of the Presbytery of East Toronto, proceeded with the Recognition which celebrated and acknowledged the ministry partnerships with Yonge Street Mission and Salvation Army.

In closing, the Rev. George Beals charged those present to surround ARISE with their prayers. It was a beautiful and joyous celebration!

Photo: Kari Kerr, onegraphicmind.com

Mission

Awarness Sunday

The worship resource for Mission Awareness Sunday has been emailed out. If you have not received the material, you can get a copy of the litany, sermon, and children's story at www.wmspcc.ca/mission-awareness-sunday or email amckeown@presbyterian.ca (the resource can be emailed or mailed out).

For more information contact Alexis McKeo

800-619-730 ext. 319

amckeown@ presbyterian.c

April 26, 2015

Theme: ReciproCare in Mission

Scripture Readings:

Psalm 15

Genesis 12:1–9

Mark 16:14–19

Author:

Rev. Shirley Gale

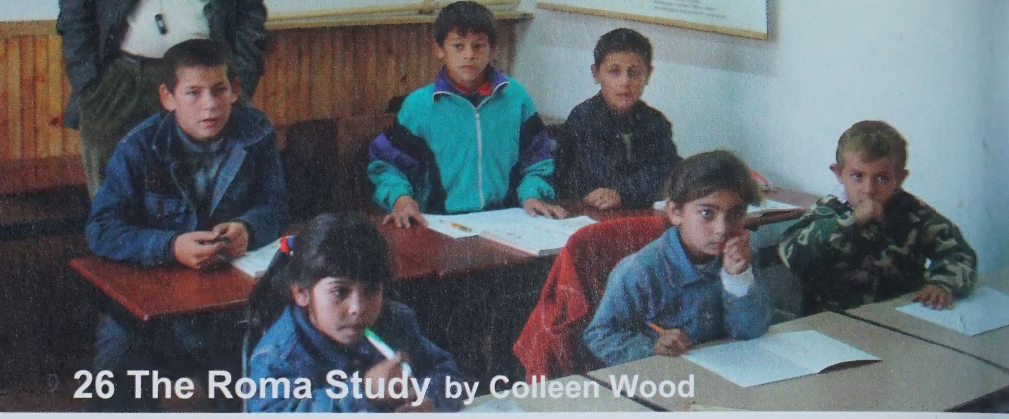
PM40013283 R9517

Please report any errors/changes in address

Glad Tidings

May/June 2015

Photo: Alex Fensham



26 The Roma Study by Colleen Wood

Contents

IN THIS ISSUE

3 **Editorial**

4 **The GrandCamp Experience**
by Brian and Janet Ham

10 **A Life Changing Experience**
by Erin Oke

14 **What Difference does Christian Camping Make?**
by Janet Eastwood

18 **Creating Community at Crieff Hills Women's Retreat**
by Fiona van Wissen

22 **The Impact of Christian Camping**
by Theresa McDonald-Lee

36 **Mission In Action**

IN THE SOCIETY

40 **In the Society**

43 **In Memoriam**

45 **WMS ... Did You Know?**

47 **Remembering**

Glad Tidings

May/June 2015
Volume 91, No. 3
EDITOR: Colleen Wood
DESIGN: Alexis McKeown

Published six times a year by the Women's Missionary Society of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Member of the Canadian Church Press.

Canada

Glad Tidings reports on aspects of the Women's Missionary Society on all levels. *Glad Tidings* challenges concerned Christians to reflect on their faith through articles and reports related to mission and social justice issues, locally, nationally, and internationally. *Glad Tidings* through its content, encourages readers to become informed, educated, inspired, and motivated to action. *GladTidings* provides a forum for a broad spectrum of opinion and information, thus the views expressed in features, news reports, letters, and book reviews are not necessarily endorsed by the WMS or by the Editor.

2015 subscription rate $15.00 plus applicable taxes: ON, NB, NL $16.95, NS $17.25, BC, AB, SK, MB, QC, $15.75, PE $17.10. WMS members are asked to send subscriptions through their group *Glad Tidings* Secretary. Individual subscribers may order direct from *Glad Tidings*. Please make all cheques and money orders payable at par to *Glad Tidings*.

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to the circulation department at 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, Ontario M3C 1J7. Phone 416-441-1111; 800-619-7301.
E-mail gladtidings@presbyterian.ca. ISSN: 00170720.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund (CPF) for our publishing activities.

Editorial

For me, when I think about camping and retreat ministries, I can't stop thinking about the verse, "I can do all things through him who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13 (NRSV) That verse was the theme verse the first summer I worked at camp. That was a life changing summer. That was the summer when I came back to the church after leaving it for my University years. It was the summer where I worked at Gracefield Camp and Conference Centre, where my faith became real, relevant, and re-ignited. So, it is no surprise that I am a strong supporter of the impact that camping and retreat ministries can have on the life of a child, youth, or adult.

Certainly, when we think of camping ministry, we tend to think about children and youth. So often, as I speak to leaders in the church, there is a mention of camping in their journey. For many, this was the first time they became Christian leaders, sometimes as children within their cabins groups, many as summer camp staff. Even those who don't take on specific leadership tasks, learn more about God, meet other young Christians, and are stretched by new experiences. For the summer staff, they learn to talk about their faith, lead Bible studies, and even provide Pastoral Care. For many, this is the time that they begin to take up regular faith practices.

But camping and retreat ministries are not just for children. There are women's groups across this country that gather. There are intergenerational camps, music camps, and spiritual retreats. Community is created. Meals are shared. God is worshiped. Spirits are lifted. Often, these retreats include hikes or walks, and sometimes even bunk beds and campfires.

The WMS has long supported camping ministries and continue to do so. They are the reason many of our sites exist with the facilities they have. They continue to fund camperships. And, they attend retreats that build up their own faith.

This year, I encourage you to listen to the stories of campers. Ask a child about their week at camp. Encourage a young person who is working at a camp, and ask them about their summer when they return. Consider participating in your camping experience, and if you can't, talk to someone who has.

The GrandCamp Experience

by Brian and Janet Ham

"It's five days you will never forget where life-long memories are made. It's a special time of bonding between you and your grandchild." **Peter Oxtobee**

Gracefield Christian Camp and Retreat Centre hosted GrandCamp 2014, where grandparents and grandchildren came together to camp for a week. GrandCamp provided a place set apart from the distractions and obligations of home. It provided a time for grandparents to focus attention on their precious loved ones, nurturing love and enjoyment of simple pleasures.

This camp was inspired by an organization called GrandCamp[1] that recognized the potential faith legacy that grandparents can have upon grandchildren. They encourage Christian camps and conferences to take up this "powerful, transformational generation to generation experience."

At Gracefield, GrandCamp provides a safe place to enjoy a full range of camp experiences. It allows grandparents the joy of having at their disposal an array of activities, each with proper equipment, instruction, and willing counsellors to accompany them. They also get to enjoy a life-guarded lake, canoes with lifejackets to fit all sizes, 280 acres of forest and marked trails, a giant forest fort (called the barracks), and a room full of creative craft materials. Having all the resources available and the counsellor's support helps both grandparents and grandchildren try activities they would never have imagined doing on their own. "It was our first time canoeing. We had never been in a canoe! A very exciting first for both of us," claimed Peter.

GrandCamp certainly creates opportunities to explore the richness of nature. Grandparents can witness their grandchild's delight in the discoveries made under rocks and logs, such as toads and salamanders, or in trees and on pathways, such as caterpillars and butterflies. There are opportunities to see the evidence of beavers at work, porcupine scampering in the woods, and deer bounding through the forest. There are birds to be sited and the call of the loon to be heard. At night, you can lie on the dock and marvel at the stars. God's creation is a wonder-filled place to spend a week together.

The best part of GrandCamp is that it takes place in the midst of a Christian community of faith. Grandparents and grandchildren

enjoy the rich values and stories of our faith. They are part of a community where youth counsellors model values you would like your grandchildren to embrace. It is a community of multi-aged campers worshiping outdoors and indoors, watching and participating in skits that bring Biblical themes into our modern lives, and enjoying art and music. GrandCamp provides times of praying using creative means such as our Kumbaya prayer trail or outdoor labyrinth.

Grandparents and grandchildren enjoy the rich value and stories of our faith.

Each day begins with a quiet meditation at our beautiful chapel rock where we sing a song and focus on a simple verse. As we sit on this large rock that overlooks the lake, this early morning perch is often surrounded by a mist, which slowly rises to reveal afresh God's handiwork. The remainder of the day is sprinkled with opportunities for spiritual enrichment. At times, grandparents gather separately to find encouragement from scripture and through shared experiences. At times, the grandchildren participate with other children and their counsellors in age-appropriate lessons that include practical and fun applications. Each day closes with worship at our outdoor chapel.

The following is a beautiful testimonial from Gezina Pluim, one of the grandmothers who attended GrandCamp last summer with her grandaughter.

There are images of Gracefield Camp that will forever be etched in my heart. Scenes from the time our young children ran through the woods and engaged in playful activities during congregational work parties and retreats. Then this past year's GrandCamp 2014 presented a special opportunity for me, as a grandparent, to add to my warm memories of Gracefield.

Opportunities to visit or spend time with our five-year-old granddaughter Kaia (who lives in Barrie, a five-hour drive from us) are not as frequent as I would like. So, the prospect of spending five days at camp with her was irresistible. Those five days of bonding with Kaia in such a peaceful environment as Gracefield, and participating in inspirational and fun-filled inter-generational group activities were terrific.

Both Kaia and I made new friends within fellow campers, while enjoying traditional camp experiences: morning energizers, outdoor worship services, games, crafts, swimming, canoeing, hiking, and evening campfires.

GrandCamp counsellors were mindful that they exert significant influence on young campers, who admire and emulate them, engaging with Kaia and other children in fun, energetic, and enthusiastic ways. Kaia was especially drawn to Emily, Ela, and Erica. Meal times were enjoyable for both of us as well, as they presented opportunities to become better acquainted with campers and counsellors.

A distinct fond recollection for me was the time spent alone in our room in White Pine Lodge. Kaia and I chatted a lot and I was able to share with her how her Daddy had grown up spending summers at Gracefield as a camper, a counsellor, and a program director. Kaia and I read

stories together, sang songs we had learned, and generally reminisced about the day's experiences. One night she was so 'charged' by the day's activities that she laughed and giggled about little things until sleep took over. Each morning I was awakened by a smiley face peering over the top bunk, announcing melodically, "Time to get up, Oma."

Kaia created her own list of her Ten Favourite Things:

- *campfire*
- *energizers*
- *canoeing*
- *Kum Ba Yah hike*
- *archery*
- *barracks*
- *water fight in the canoe*
- *counsellors*
- *sleeping in the top bunk*
- *the dance party.*

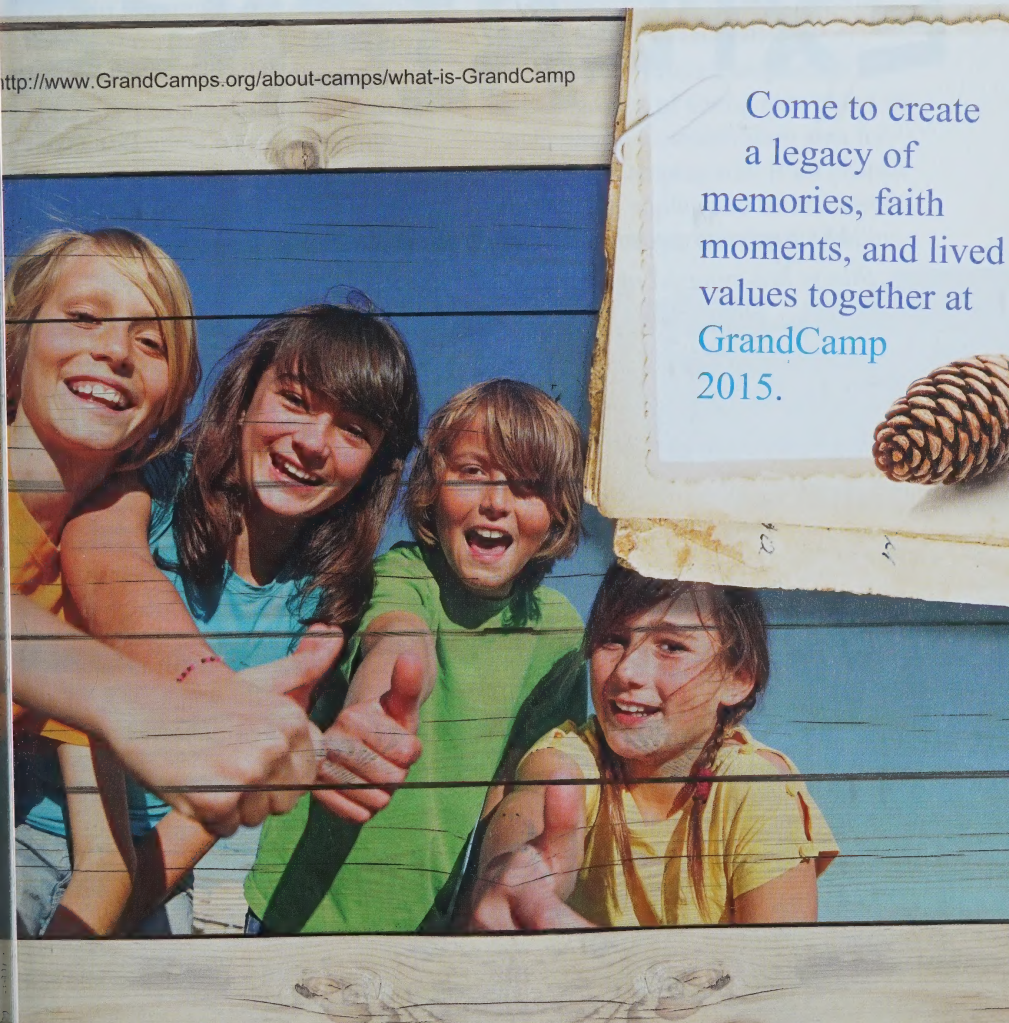
Why GrandCamp?

- Presbyterian Church demographics consist of more grandparents then parents.
- A North American trend has identified more grandchildren travelling and holidaying with grandparents.
- More grandparents are parenting their grandchildren.
- More caregivers are reluctant to release children to go to residential camps. By offering GrandCamp near the beginning of the camping season, families become acquainted with staff, the camp and its safety measures.
- Grandparents want to create positive memories and build stronger relationships with their grandchildren. Many grandparents do not live close to their grandchildren.
- Grandparents want their grandchildren to experience nature and outdoor fun.
- Grandparents want to pass on a living faith to their grandchildren. Camp offers a variety of ways that the Christian faith can be experienced in a short time frame.
- Grandparents appreciate additional staff to help supervise outdoor skills and adventures.
- Staff offers additional support, giving grandparents opportunity for respite during the day.
- Gracefield Christian Camp and Retreat Centre can offer a variety of accommodations to suit grandparent's preferences.
- Some camps in United States have been running GrandCamps successfully for approximately 15 years
- Curriculum especially crafted for GrandCamp is available.

GrandCamp 2014, without a doubt, created memories for both of us that will last a lifetime! We vowed this special time at camp together would not be our last!

Come to GrandCamp and make it a week focused on your relationship with your grandchildren. Choose the most fitting accommodation to suit your style and personal needs, whether you stay at a campsite, cabin, or lodge. Make your own meals, or have them made for you by our kitchen crew who have knowledge of food allergies. "You won't regret the time and effort to come," encourages Peter.

Brian and Janet Ham are the Executive Directors of Gracefield Christian Camp and Retreat Centre, A Ministry of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.


ttp://www.GrandCamps.org/about-camps/what-is-GrandCamp
Come to create a legacy of memories, faith moments, and lived values together at GrandCamp 2015.

A LIFE CHANGING EXPERIENCE

by Erin Oke

"Meeting new people from different places and learning new things has opened my mind about the world as a whole. It is a great experience as it helps us all learn about each other and the hardships some of us have to overcome. It is where we come together to just listen to one another and work together. Camp has helped me get away from the city life, get some peace and quiet in the country side. It has allowed me to be open with myself and try new things and just enjoy life!"

Evangel Hall Mission (ehm) has been providing compassionate service in downtown Toronto since 1913, offering a host of programs to support people living in poverty and social isolation. In addition to the services geared towards our adult homeless population (drop-in centre, free dental clinic, residence of supportive housing), ehm offers free programming for low-income children and youth designed to invest in young people and to help break the cycle of poverty and provide resources and opportunities to families that would otherwise be financially inaccessible. The summer camp experience can be life changing for young people, a chance to learn and grow, connect with nature, and build skills and

friendships. Ehm has created three unique summer camps that are fun and free for all who wish to attend.

Jump Into Summer Day Camp helps children aged 6–13 start their summer off right by introducing them to all kinds of accessible, affordable places, and activities around Toronto. Every day of camp holds a different adventure. From hiking through local green spaces, to visiting animals at a farm, to swimming in Lake Ontario at some nearby beaches, our Jump campers get to understand how much nature is available to explore without even leaving the city. Community partnerships with the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Ontario Science Centre make it possible to bring the campers free of charge to check out the latest exhibits, and then, inspired by what they've experienced, they get a chance to create their own art projects and science experiments. Day camp mornings begin at the ehm Youth Centre with a hot healthy breakfast and the campers also help make lunch every day, learning valuable (and delicious) life skills. One camper shared, "I can't wait to come back next year! My favourite part is EVERYTHING!!!"

Our Teen Guys Camptacular brings groups of young men out of the inner city to a conservation area for a five-day camping trip. It's a chance for them to unplug and be immersed in the natural surroundings. Sleeping

Jump Into Summer Day Camp

in tents in the forest, cooking meals over the fire, trying their hands at fishing, canoeing and swimming in the lake—these experiences are far removed from their regular life and have a profound impact on them. The campers have the freedom to explore and connect to the natural world and with each other. This compels them to engage creatively with their new environment, inventing games and physical challenges, and bonding over their time together. The time spent in nature has a restorative effect on the guys, making for happier, healthier young men at the end of the trip. One of our young men spoke of his time at Camptacular this way, "This experience gave me a chance to reflect and now I feel I can move forward in a positive way."

Outside the Lines provides a week-long retreat for arts-oriented teenage girls, a segment which has been overlooked by traditional camp and recreational programs. While at camp, the young women participate in different arts workshops designed to facilitate self-expression, build

Teen Guys Camptacular

confidence, and develop creative thinking and leadership skills. Activities range from dancing to songwriting, mural making to comedy improvisation, photography to storytelling. We also incorporate some more traditional camp activities, such as swimming, sports and campfires, and even more intense physical challenges, like climbing on a high-ropes course and volunteering at an animal sanctuary.

The program is designed to help these young women realize their potential by fostering their creative selves. The camp's natural environment allows everyone to take a break from the stress of life in the city and enjoy a safe place where they can be themselves and take artistic risks. Outside the Lines has a transformative effect on its participants. Year after year, young women come together to strengthen their voices, discover new talents, and come away with fresh perspectives to bring back to their daily lives. The artistic work they create is inspiring, real and honest, and the memories and friendships forged last long after camp is over. One of the participants shared, "I discovered talents I didn't know I had."

All of ehm's summer camp programs seek to empower economically disadvantaged young people by fostering creativity, confidence, leadership, and life skills. The safe, nurturing spaces created allow the campers to try new things and to talk honestly about the issues that are important in their lives. The camp staff team, often comprised of former program participants, serve as role models to the youth, listening and encouraging everyone to be their best selves.

Campers come away from camp with valuable skills that they can take back to their families and communities. Through group activities, the campers learn teamwork, problem-solving, and healthy ways to resolve conflicts. Facing creative and physical challenges help build self-esteem and the youth emerge from their camp experience with a sense of accomplishment and possibility.

Erin Oke is ehm's Youth Program Coordinator and has been the Camps' Director since 2007.

"This camp has been a very wonderful experience for me and I love attending every year. The first time I went to Outside The Lines I was extremely shy and not too social. OTL helped me break out of my shell and helped me gain friends that I still keep in contact with today. OTL definitely helped me broaden my horizons. For me OTL is a camp where I could escape, be free, be happy, and just be me."

WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES CHRISTIAN CAMPING MAKE?

by Janet Eastwood

"If you had told me ten years ago that a small camp could make as much of an impact on my life as it has and even begin to demonstrate the love that God has for me, I would not have believed you. However, no matter how small the camp or group of kids, no matter how young, old, or difficult the child may be, God works in the coolest ways to bring His children to Him. I am forever grateful for Camp Douglas and all of the staff and campers that I have gotten to know over the past eleven summers."

Robyn "Red" White

Camp Douglas is a small camp, based on a waterfront property of ten acres of field and forest on British Columbia's Sunshine Coast. We aren't a large camp, physically. We don't have horses or water slides or a sheer wall of rock for climbing up and belaying down. We have something better.

Camp Douglas is a community of Presbyterians, who love God and love each other. Campers arrive at the ferry terminal knowing that their cabin leaders care for them, and that there's a good friend somewhere among their cabin-mates, waiting to be met. They know that at Camp Douglas, they can relax and be themselves, secure in the knowledge that they are loved. At the end of the week, campers go home having experienced God's love in an abundance of ways: the marvel that is creation; the attention of diligent, warm-hearted leaders; the friendship of fellow campers; and most of all the close community that is formed when people are shaped by prayer and united in spirit by devotion to God

and care for each other.

At Camp Douglas, it doesn't matter how many friends you have at home. You have friends here. It doesn't matter what your clothes are like. You will get dirty and you will likely don costumes and dance around in them. It doesn't matter what group you belong to at school, or even if you don't have a group at all. Here, you belong—all of us belong—because we are all God's children.

These children of God, campers and staff, leave here emboldened to stand in front of congregations and witness how God has changed their lives through camp. "People at camp really care about me." "I feel like I belong and no one is judging me by what my clothes are like or how I do my hair." "I don't know where I would be if I hadn't come to camp."

How much of a difference can one week out of a year make? It turns out, a lot. One week of living in a Christian community, 24 hours a day, is a powerful experience of love, and one that is hard to resist.

"When it comes to going home, my granddaughter does not want to leave," Gerda Heidenreich (Haney Presbyterian) told me. She tells me she absolutely likes everything about Camp Douglas—the theme breakfasts, canoeing, swimming, arts and crafts, games, and especially the morning chapel time. She says it is "a wonderful time to start the day. It is a beautiful place to have the outdoor chapel amidst God's wonderful creation. There we feel close to God and his love for us." Days at camp are built around the frame of worship: chapel first thing in the morning; bible study before lunch; campfire in the evenings; and cabin devotions last thing before bed. Prayer, study, and song mark the passage of time, and mark the hearts of campers and staff alike as they are formed into disciples who seek God's face. Spontaneous bursts of song reflect the delight of campers and staff.

"I think the whole camp experience was God touching my life. It's a blessed place, with blessed people," said Alexa "Twix" Davis (Calvin Presbyterian). "I can't get enough of this place."

Leaders-in-training (LITs) come to camp for three intensive weeks of learning how to be Christian leaders; of thinking, stretching, and deepening what they believe; and of having a lot of fun. LITs gain the skills that they will need as leaders at camp, in church, and in their home communities. They also build a network of friends they can rely on. Amid the chaos and gleeful noise that is the natural consequence of any group of teenagers spending time

"When I was a camper, I was encouraged by one of the leaders to decide to follow Jesus. He said that my life would never be the same. And it hasn't. My relationship with God is definitely not something I left at camp. It's probably the most important thing I've taken with me into the 'real world' of college, marriage, work, mothering, and ministry."

Lynne "Strawberry" Kergan

together are islands of peace. The leaders of the LITs send them out to find a place where they can be still and listen to God, perhaps meditate on a passage from the Bible. These pockets of silence and solitude are profound and we hope that they see that this is a practice worth continuing at home.

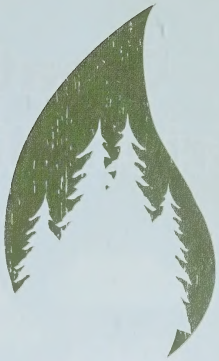
It is not only the LITs who are inspired to lead, however. One evening as my cabin prepared for bed, from out of the blue one of my campers said, "Thistle, you lead devotions every night. Why don't we do it tonight?" The other campers immediately agreed, with much discussion of what they would do devotions on. We settled on an amount of time for them to prepare and I sat outside on the porch with the few girls, who didn't want to lead devotions. Inside the cabin, the girls who remained clustered on a bed, heads bent over Bibles, and hands scribbling notes on scrap pieces of paper. I had never seen ten-, eleven-, and twelve-year-olds so eager to perform exegesis! Nor had I ever had a cabin decide to take on the duty and delight of leading night-time cabin devotions and prayer. But this group of girls, most of whom had known each other for all of three days, took on teaching the Bible to their cabin mates and to me, and did it with zeal.

Hannah "Rosie" Smith said it all, "This summer has been one of the most rewarding of my life. I have found that leading worship and teaching children about the Bible is one of my passions and I hope to continue doing it in the future. I have loved witnessing the way that God works in the lives of all the campers even for the one week that they attend camp." One week does make a difference.

Some campers come with a friend they know from home. Others arrive knowing no one. Many campers make friends that

Camp Douglas "modelled for me and taught me what it is like to live in a Christian community, in a way that only living in it for an extended period of time can."

Thomas "Lancelot" Dennett



they see year after year at camp, even if they live too far apart to visit during the school year. "Camp is fun and I made a new best friend," Arianna (Haney Presbyterian) said. Next summer, Arianna looks forward to seeing the friends she met last summer, and meeting her new leaders. Swimming, forest games, pranks, and kitchen raids are a bonus.

Every year Robyn "Red" White and a group of friends she made at camp would discuss and organize which week all of them would be able to go to Camp Douglas, so they could see each other every summer, a careful balancing act of schedules they continued all the way into LIT. It was because of a friend that Robyn came to camp for the first time as a nine-year-old. As soon as she got home, she began counting down the weeks until next summer. She returned year after year. "After a couple of summers, questions started stirring in my heart. I always knew about God and Jesus' sacrifice, but I had never really understood or dedicated my life to him." Robyn asked her cabin leaders question after question, and early one morning, sitting on the cabin porch, Robyn committed her heart and life to Christ. Two years later, she was baptized in the ocean at Camp Douglas, the place where she came to know and love God. Robyn loves seeing God at work in her life and in the lives of the children and youth she works with, and she is currently the director of the youth programs at Coquitlam Presbyterian.

This is what Camp Douglas is about. Sharing God. Building Lives of Faith. Creating Leaders. Does Christian camping make a difference? Definitely.

Janet "Thistle" Eastwood began going to Camp Douglas when she was three years old. Every summer since then, she has been either a camper, LIT, volunteer, or staff member. During the other ten months of the year, she sings in the Oculus Chamber Choir, which is devoted to performing and promoting sacred choral music in the Vancouver area.

Creating Community at Crieff Hills Women's Retreat

by Fiona van Wissen

As I look at photos from last November's women's retreat at Crieff Hills, I am touched by the faces. I see beautiful smiles, people singing, heads thrown back in laughter, and even a few tears. These are the faces of women joined in fellowship, sharing a weekend of learning and growing. One participant described this annual retreat as a "community gathering of women from all over Ontario, coming together each Fall to reconnect with one another, and to deepen our relationship with God, and with each other as Sisters in Christ."

As the women arrive at the Conference Hall on Friday with excited greetings and hugs, someone exclaimed that, "it feels like coming home!" After registering, women head out to find their rooms in the nearby lodges, named Matthew, Mark, and Luke. As dinner time approaches everyone is guided by the warm glow of the lamps along the short path leading to the dining hall.

Meals are served in Maclean Hall, a historic building built in 1874 as a one-room school house. Colourful handmade quilts now decorate the walls and the sound of women's voices fill the room as they sit down at the round tables to enjoy the delicious food served family style. Over the course of the meal, the level of conversation grows. Kitchen staff say hello and explain the options for those with special diets. Dessert is always a highlight, not to mention the pleasure of having someone else cook and do dishes! That first meal together begins to create a sense of community that will grow throughout the weekend experience.

On the walk back to the conference hall, we notice the darkness falling as we follow the path carpeted by pine needles. Friday evening, we get to know each other better and meet our speaker who introduces the theme for the weekend. Our speakers challenge us to think and question as we are all lifelong learners. Last year, the Rev. Kathy Fraser led us on a colourful journey and the previous year, the Rev. Dr. Emily Bissett reflected on the seasons of our lives. This year we look forward to having the Rev. Kristine O'Brien share on the theme, Simplify.

Each year, about 50 women from churches all over the province participate in our annual women's retreat. The peaceful natural setting, combined with good food and conversation, teaching and sharing, playing and singing, walking and resting, allow our day-to-day concerns to be put aside so we can focus on our faith journey. It truly is, as the Crieff Hills logo says, 'a place apart'.

After the introductory evening and a good night's sleep, we begin with breakfast on Saturday morning. Those here for the first time have already begun making new friends. Some may be tired from staying up a little too late. Others have even been out early walking the trails or watching the sun rise behind the

cross on the hill. Before eating, we sing grace, filling the hall with beautiful music. And that brings me to the music—the weekend just wouldn't be the same without it! Music is an integral part of the weekend. Joining together in song creates community and touches our hearts deeply. Over the past few years, we have been blessed to have the enthusiasm and creativity of Catherine Brown to lead us in hymns, praise songs, and wonderful tunes of years gone by that speak to the theme of the retreat. Our musical rejoicing might also include instruments and movement, bubbles and balloons!

During our free time on Saturday afternoon, some women will take time to walk on their own and reflect on the sessions, perhaps visiting Crieff's outdoor labyrinth or prayer shelter, while others might join a group of friends and hike the more challenging red trail through the softwood and hardwood forests of Crieff Hills.

Many of the women comment on how they relate to God through nature. "The trails, the birds, and the deep feeling of the presence of God in this Holy place leaves the retreatant going home with an incredible feeling of peace," writes Nancy, a regular participant. Aileen often walks the trails and appreciates how "the benches along the trails are set just exactly where a wondering/wandering soul needs to sit and ponder!"

Other women find that the retreat provides an opportunity to re-connect with friends made in past years, "finding out what is new in their lives, their faith journeys, and in their churches." Elke appreciates how, "when I come to a weekend I feel cared for, appreciated, and valued" and that it is a place "to truly re-create, be renewed, become re-energized, and most of all refocus on God and what He has done and continues to do in my life." In the past ten years, she has only missed one women's retreat at Crieff and says, "I don't intend to miss any others if I can help it!"

"I don't intend to miss any others if I can help it!"

A planning team, which works throughout the year to provide direction, allows this amazing ministry to happen. As well, Marylu Pentelow, from Crieff Hills, has put so much into this event over the last ten years. When asked for comments, many of the past participants were quick to respond,

showing the impact and love of this retreat.

On the last day of the Fall Women's Retreat, the women join for Sunday morning worship. Music is in the air, candles are lit, and the round table is set with bread and grape juice for communion. As we look around the room, we notice changes in the faces of the women since Friday. Those who had arrived carrying heavy burdens now seem lighter, those who came not knowing anyone are now surrounded by friends, and those who came with anticipation are rejoicing in the present moment together. As we look around the room, compassion and joy are visible on faces of women worshipping God and celebrating life.

If reading about the Crieff Hills Women's Retreat has sparked your interest, you are more than welcome to join us at this year's retreat on November 13–15. Visitors are also welcome at any time to come to Crieff Hills for a day of personal retreat and to make use of the quiet Common Room in the new Pines building with its wonderful views. This year Crieff Hills is celebrating our 40th Anniversary as a Retreat and Conference Centre and we know that this ministry, as well as others, allow participants to grow in their faith and knowledge of God.

PCPak
ou've got mail...
But do you want it?
Let us know how we can improve the PCPak
ection of resources, which is mailed three times
a year to all congregations, by completing a
short online survey.
Find a link to the survey and
lectronic copies of all resources at:
presbyterian.ca/pcpak
The Presbyterian
Church in Canada

The Impact of Christian Camping

By Theresa McDonald-Lee

At the Centre of Excellence Conference, the leaders spent hours defining the positive impact of Christian camping. Theresa, and her husband, Johnathon Lee, attended this conference.

Spiritual Growth

It might not be surprising to focus on Spiritual Growth when considering the many positive impacts of Christian camping. Afterall, Camp Kintail, and other Presbyterian Church camps, were founded in part to foster spiritual growth in the campers and young people who took part in the programming. It might seem so obvious that it is not even worth

mentioning.

However, the desire of our founders is still true today. As Christian leaders, we are committed to encouraging and supporting spiritual growth in all of our campers. For some campers, this means a safe place to express their faith that is grown at home and at church. For others, this is the place where they first hear Bible stories and that they might first know that they are beloved children of God. For some campers, camp is a place where they can ask questions and express their doubts.

Camp also has a profound effect on its staff. This is the place where they are stretched to consider what they believe for themselves.

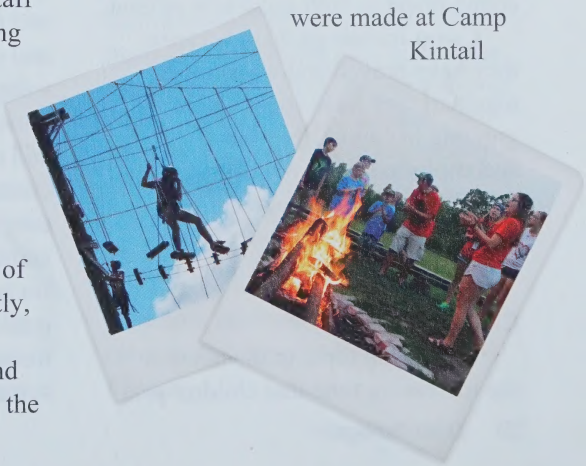
Camp also impacts congregations. For congregations who host our Kintail On The Road, they are working to invite children into a relationship with a positive Christian community. Spiritual growth is the rock on which all else happens at Kintail.

Camp Kintail is a place where faith is both taught and caught. Staff members share Bible stories during FLASH (Faith, Learning, and Sharing). Chapel begins our day and devotions and prayer end our days. Music teaches the Christian story at every hour and in every place at Kintail. Counsellors tell their own stories of faith. But perhaps most importantly, campers experience Christian community in the way we love and serve at camp. Through watching the staff and our volunteers, campers see the lively work of God happening right in front of them. Campers know something is different at Camp and we hope this continues to make them curious and open to the life of faith.

Spiritual growth will be different for every camper. It might be learning to pray, or asking a question, or teaching another camper how to find a Bible verse. It may be saying grace for the first time, or engaging a chaplain in a serious question, or simply taking a few moments to sit in silence before the sunset. Spiritual growth is one of the true gifts of summer camp and the most powerful impact we make at Kintail.

Friendship

Much has been made about the magic of friendships formed at camp. Many movies about summer camp will highlight the long-lasting and deep friendships nurtured while young people are away at summer camp. This is very true. I have many deep and true friends that were made at Camp Kintail



during the years I was a camper, staff, and director. We may not always see each other, but we have a meaningful connection that time has not changed.

At Camp, children are able to make new and caring friendships, under the watchful and concerned eye of their counsellor. These friendships at camp can take children out of their normal circle. Campers from all different regions and backgrounds are placed together in a cabin and they can form quick and tight bonds. It doesn't matter that one child is a newcomer to Canada and another is from a city and the third is from the country. At camp, they look the same in their t-shirts and camp dirt, and they don't notice the differences.

One mother recently told me how glad she was of the friends her daughter has made at camp, and the way they keep in touch through social media throughout the year. She said that she believed the one thing that made these friendships different from the friendships at home and school, was that camp friends have a shared commitment to faith and a love of God.

Camp friends go deep because they have prayed and worshipped together, they have spent nights giggling in cabins, they have accomplished goals together. Camp friendships are held together by the deep true love of God and the acceptance of Christian community.

Creation Care

A frequent topic in the news is the increasing time that children and young adults spend in front of screens and the rapidly decreasing time children spend outdoors. Perhaps you have read the book "The Last Child in The Woods" by Richard Louve where he coins the term 'nature-deficit disorder.' As children spend less time outdoors, they are missing out on exploration, adventure, sunlight, and activity. Spending time outdoors is so important, especially in this country where childhood obesity rates are going up.

Camp is a unique opportunity for children to get outside. At camp, we spend much of our time outdoors. At Kintail, we also ask the questions, "Are we enjoying and taking care of God's creation?" If we can do something outdoors, we do! Crafts are created in the sunlight, Bible study takes place in the open air treehouse, and music sounds better in the chapel.

After spending time in nature, all of us more readily want to find our place in creation and help it to flourish. We teach about eco-systems and habitats, composting and gardening, low-trace camping, and our watershed. Campers use solar lanterns in the summer and remember to "take what you need and eat what you take." Crafts are created with treasures recycled from congregations. Through teaching and example, campers learn to care for creation. By spending time in the outdoors, they are reminded that they too are an important part of the eco-system and God's beloved creation.

Cultivating Compassion

When many people think of summer camp, images of beaches, rock climbing towers, and cabin cheers might quickly come to mind. Through those activities there is a larger goal that Kintail and many other faith-based camps share. It is not just about learning to canoe and making candles, but about learning to give and receive care, to show compassion. Following Jesus means walking in his footsteps and noticing each person, especially those on the outside. Camp is a living laboratory on cultivating kindness.

It can be as simple as reminding everyone at a table to take a little, so everyone can have enough. It is ensuring that the high ropes are accessible to everyone, including those with mobility issues. It is offering hospitality to all our guests. It is making sure everyone is invited. It is teaching campers to sweep the floor. It is counsellors encouraging their campers to cheer each other one. It is picking food in the garden that will be shared with the whole camp. It is all of these little things.

But it is bigger things too. It is meeting and welcoming friends from Malawi to camp a couple of years ago. It is praying for them now. It is learnoung about Healing and Reconciliation. It is connecting to agencies and churches to allow all children to come to camp. It is the staff learning about mental health and eating disorders. It is all of these big things.

Through big things and the little things, the camp activities and the worship, we work to cultivate compassion in our campers that they can bring home with them. We want to create campers who care for the earth, for their fellow human beings, and for their neighbours.

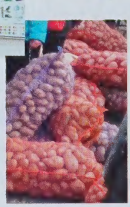
Rev. Theresa McDonald-Lee, and her husband, Johnathon Lee, have been serving as Co-Executive Directors of Camp Kintail since November 2007. Theresa is a long time Kintail camper, LIT, and staff member.

Theresa is looking forward Cake By The Lake on July 2 when Kintail has the opportunity to thank WMS members, and other women of the church, for their contribution to Kintail.

THE Roma

Justice requires concern for the p of the world. It seeks the best way create well-being in every socie

Living Faith 8



by Colleen V

This is the last of four mission studies on the topic of social justice. The following sessions were written:

What is Social Justice?
was in July/August 2014 edition

Human Trafficking
was in September/ October 2014 edition

Refugees
in January/February 2015 edition

Opening Prayer

One: The LORD is a stronghold for the oppressed,

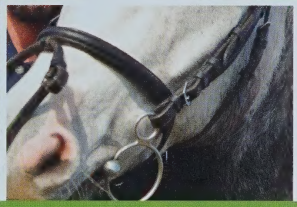
All: a stronghold in times of trouble. (Psalm 9:9 NRSV)

One: As we learn about the Roma people, let us uphold them in prayer.

All: God, give us open hearts and minds as we learn together. Strengthen us as we strive for justice and be with the oppressed peoples of the world. Amen.

Introduction

The Roma people are an ethnic community of Indian origin that currently live mostly in Europe and the Americas. In this study, we will focus primarily on the Roma ethnic communities that are living in the regions of the sub-Carpathian Ukraine (where The Presbyterian Church in Canada ministers with the Roma people), Hungary, and those who are currently residing in Canada. Around the world, and within Canada, the Roma people have often faced oppression, discrimination, and prejudice.



Roma in Europe

Roma in Canada

Bible Study

What are some of the things you treasure about your home? What are some of the positive things about where you live? What would you hate to leave behind if you were forced to leave your home?

Read Leviticus 19:33–37

Name some of the groups in your neighbourhood, or within Canada, that you might consider 'strangers'? What are some things about them that might make them 'different' from those who have traditionally resided in your neigbourhood? In what ways has your neighbourhood changed? Have you seen any racism or oppression towards this group?

In this passage from Leviticus, we remember that the Israelites had once been strangers in Egypt and God cared for them. They now are called to do likewise to the strangers in their midst. They are to care for the strangers and embrace them as friends. How can we welcome strangers into our neighbourhoods? How do we welcome strangers into our churches or WMS groups?

The Roma people seem to be strangers wherever they are. Take a moment to prayer for the Roma people and others around the world, who are without a home.

Let us pray,

Gracious and loving God, God of the stranger, thank you for the homes that we have. We pray for those without a home or a land to call their own. We pray for those who are oppressed by the dominant culture around them. We pray for the Roma people. Be with them wherever they reside. Keep them safe as they struggle for safe homes, food, water, and education. We pray for Brian Johnston and David and Anna Pándy-Szekeres, our own Presbyterian

Church in Canada staff, whose work in Eastern Europe includes work with the Roma people. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

The Roma People

According to the 2011 Census, there were 5,255 Canadians who claimed Romani (Gypsy) ancestry.[i] Many are clustered in the areas of Toronto and Hamilton, Ontario, and if you listen to the news, you may have heard that this number will likely not increase very quickly.

When the Roma people began immigrating to Canada in the 1990s, there were protests, as some did not want these 'gypsies' coming to Canada. Yet, there numbers continued to rise over the next several years. Beginning in 2008, Roma refugees were accepted into Canada from Hungary in record numbers because they faced increased discrimination in Hungary.[ii]

Today, we hear two sides to a story. On one side of the story, we hear that the Roma continue to experience great difficulty in Eastern Europe. A Global News report dated November 5, 2014, talks about the very difficult conditions faced by the Roma communities. There are stories of racism and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Human Rights states that one in three Roma in Europe are unemployed and 90% live below the poverty line. A 2014 study from the Harvard School of Public Health and Harvard University entitled "Accelerating Patterns of Anti-Roma Violence in Hungary," reports of an increase in extremist violence against the Roma. And it says that the government is not responding effectively to these hate crimes.[iii]

The Roma children also have difficulty receiving education. A 2011 UNICEF paper reports that less than 20% of the Roma children are enrolled in primary school, compared with 90% of the non-Roma children. And of those who enroll, "many drop out because of racism, or the inability of the schools to meet their specific needs, often those of differing languages."[iv]

I asked David Pándy-Szekeres, The Presbyterian Church

in Canada mission staff, to give me some information on the Roma people in his area, and his work along with the Reformed Church of the sub-Carpathian Ukraine (RCCU).

When setting out to describe or list the characteristics of any ethnic group of people, it would be a grave mistake to think that this can be done in any conclusive manner given the significant number of variations within any such group. The Roma ethnic community is no exception to this and, as a consequence, the information shared here pertains specifically to the Roma communities amidst which we have launched mission outreach programs throughout our years of service in Ukraine.

The most obvious physical feature one notices with Roma communities living in the regions of the sub-Carpathian Ukraine are that their collective dwellings are situated at the edge of conglomerations, at the outer edge or periphery of a village, town, or city. Closely clustered together, the dwellings are often of a make-shift nature, constructed in haphazard ways with all sorts of materials, this itself being evidence of a certain level of poverty having sprung up in an area of the territory under the jurisdiction of the local municipal authority which is unzoned and unserviced.

The poverty of those living in such Roma "encampments" stems, for the most part, from the fact that hardly any of these individuals have any gainful employment, be that of a permanent or seasonal nature. This lack of employment can be attributed to two main factors, one being that the Roma generally have a very low level of education, if any at all (more than half of those living here are totally illiterate) and the second factor being that there is very little employment available in the region, even for those who are well-educated. Caught up in a vicious cycle where one negative factor feeds into

Galatians 3:28

There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

(NRSV)

The population of Roma in Europe is estimated at between eight to twelve million. (Romaninet)

another one typical of poverty situations, these Roma groups and individuals, nonetheless, are trying to eke out an existence the best that they can. Unfortunately, the possibilities and opportunities are few and far between.

The issues which need to be addressed to resolve the situation of these people are of a magnitude which far surpasses the possibilities of any church community, such as that of the Reformed Church of the sub-Carpathian Ukraine (RCCU). Nonetheless, in view of its calling, the RCCU many years ago launched a mission outreach program within these communities, this program having several components, but of these, two are most prominent: 1) providing elementary-level education, primarily at the pre-school and kindergarten levels as well as afternoon homework help programs, and 2) establishing communities of Christian faith where regular worship services, Bible study, and youth group activities are provided. At present, there are over one hundred individuals working within the context of this outreach program, in sixteen pre-school/kindergartens and afternoon help-schools, and fourteen Christian faith-based communities.

The most recent pre-school/kindergarten site was launched in the town of Péterfalva in September 2014. Here, Roma children are bused in from three different Roma encampments which are within close vicinity. As in other such institutions operated by the RCCU, upon arrival in the morning, the children are provided with a breakfast, which is followed by a Bible story and the singing of praises. Next, are the lessons for that day and some educational playtime and there is a short recess to go outside and play. The day ends with a cooked meal for lunch after which the children are returned to their homes by bus.

In addition to the above, the RCCU also tries to provide humanitarian aid in the form of clothing and food to these communities. The most recent such undertaking, in February, was the distribution of 23 tons of potatoes provided by the Ministry of Agriculture of the government in Hungary. Close to 450 Roma families in the town of Beregszász were thus able to benefit from this.

Providing humanitarian aid is never an easy undertaking, firstly because it is always in short supply, and secondly because it is always difficult to decide as to

which individuals or communities should be the beneficiaries. The teaching of the Gospel, however, is available in an endless supply and to all who wish to benefit as the RCCU's outreach workers offer many such opportunities in over thirty such sites. Despite the best efforts of these outreach workers, it cannot yet be said that the numbers of Roma thirsting to hear the Gospel are greater than those clamouring for food, clothing, medical care, housing, or perhaps employment. It is thus perhaps not far-fetched to say that there remains much to be done within this particular realm. Prospects in this respect are less than promising as there is little doubt that it will be these Roma communities, which will be most adversely affected by the continued deterioration of the Ukrainian economy.

These Roma in the Ukraine, like those in Hungary, face racial discrimination, and many do not have identity cards, which means they also have limited rights. With the current state of crisis in the Ukraine, Canada is willing to accept Ukrainian refugees, but it is too early to know how this will play out and if it will have any effect on the disadvantaged Roma.

The Hungarian Roma are no longer coming to Canada as refugees due to past changes in our immigration policy. Within Canada, major changes occurred beginning in December 2012, when Hungary was named a 'safe' country. Jason Kenney, then Canada's Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, when speaking about these new changes, also often chose to single out the European Roma as 'bogus' refugees, who would be eliminated with these new policies. It seems that Canada would not be a safe place for the Roma.

Since then, many Roma people already in Canada were deported and drastically fewer have tried to enter the country. Those who still enter, have far less time to

Almost every Roma child from Hungary and the Czech Republic that I have taught in Toronto have reported abuse at school—physical, verbal, and psychological violence from teachers and other students and their parents. (prior to coming to Canada)

~ Gina Csanyi-Robah
Executive Director of the Toronto Roma Community Centre

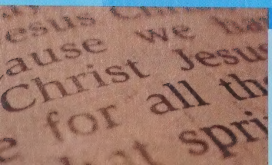
prepare for an immigration hearing, resulting in much higher failure rates. The Canadian government actually went as far as to erect six billboards in Miskolc, an area where many Roma refugees and failed asylum seekers will be removed quickly. The Canadian government argues that Hungary is a democracy that does guarantee protection to its people. The question is, is it working and keeping the Roma safe?

And, even those Roma who live in Canada face racism. There have been a few prominent stories of crime associated with the Roma in Canada, but many of the Roma refugees just want to become productive members of society, says Tibor Lukacs, founder of the United Roma of Hamilton. He says because of a few stories, he feels he is always trying to "prove he's a good Roma."[vi]

These is also much anecdotal evidence of the Roma fitting in well in the Toronto area. With some special ESL programs in place, Roma children are thriving in school. There are also stories of many Roma building a successful new life in Hamilton, many starting their own businesses, some now being third-generation Roma living in Canada. [vii]

For those still in Hungary and the Ukarine, the situation does not seem to be improving. In Hungary, extremist groups are growing as is the persecution of the Roma. Even extremist political groups are increasing and becoming more popular. Within the Ukraine, the threat of war is real. And, Canada is not looking to change their immigration policy and continues to discourage Hungarian refugees. A November 2014 report by Global News, even stated that refugee applicants were being offered compensation to abandon their refugee claims, and many of these were Roma. [viii]

And, just as I prepare to print this study, the Roma are once again in the news with a troubling story. A Toronto lawyer, Viktor Hohots, admits to professional misconduct in his dealing with Roma Hungarians. This means that 13 complainants did not have their papers properly prepared in their claims for asylum. Most of these were denied asylum and have been deported, including a well-known case of a Roma family, who sought sanctuary in a Toronto church for three years, hoping to avoid deportation. They were deported in December and are said to be in hiding



in Budapest.[ix] "This is a case where justice delayed is justice denied." says Mary Jo Leddy, of Toronto's Romero House refugee shelter. And there may be many others who were deported because Hohots was involved in over 900 claims between August 2009 and February 2012.[x]

As we consider our response to the Roma, consider how we are called to welcome the stranger. Consider your home and your neighbourhood. Consider how you can reach out to those without a home, like the Roma. Finally, consider how our political policies affect the stranger, and how you can become involved through research, advocacy, and prayer.

Closing Prayer

One: Loving God, Give those without hope, your hope.
All: This is our prayer.
One: Give those without peace, your peace.
All: This is our prayer.
One: Help us to welcome the strangers in our own land,
All: And to pray for those who are strangers in lands throughout the world.
One: Be with the Roma and help them as they face persecution here and around the world.
All: Amen.

---

[i] Statistics Canada. "2011 National Household Survey: Data tables". Retrieved 11 February 2014.

[ii] http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/hungarian-roma-hope-for-sanctuary-in-canada-1.1169996

[iii] http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/bernie-farber/peter-kent-refugees_b_4927108.html

[iv] The Right of Roma Children to Education, Position Paper, UNICEF 2011 United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) p.4

[v] http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2013/01/25/roma_refugees_canadian_billboards_in_hungary_warn_of_deportation.html

[vi] http://www.thespec.com/news-story/2245705-the-roma-of-hamilton/

[vii] http://hungarianspectrum.org/2013/02/09/the-roma-of-hungary-a-canadian-view-by-judy-young-drach/

[viii] http://globalnews.ca/news/1618256/canada-pays-thousands-of-roma-to-abandon-refugee-appeals-leave-country/

[ix] http://www.thestar.com/news/immigration/2015/03/02/lawyer-admits-to-negligence-representing-roma-refugees.html

[x] Ibid.

The PCC* staff in Eastern Europe

(Supported by *Presbyterians Sharing*)

Brian Johnston

Brian Johnston is an English and music teacher at the Theological Seminary of the Hungarian Reformed Church in Cluj, Romania. Brian teaches English to first- and second-year Reformed and Lutheran students, with an emphasis on theological language.

Besides his work at the seminary, Brian teaches Hungarian and Roma children English and music in various parts of the country.

David and Anna Pándy-Szekeres

David and Anna Pándy-Szekeres serve with the Reformed Church of Sub-Carpathian Ukraine (RCCU), a church of ethnic Hungarians. He is currently the Supervisor of Missions, General Director of Schools, and Public Relations Officer for the RCCU. David helps to post and supervise RCCU missionaries serving communities in Ukraine, and he coordinates four Christian secondary schools that serve Hungarian students living in Ukraine.

With a recent government change, David is working to secure funding for the RCCU schools, while also working on the construction of two new school buildings. He supervises Ferenc Homoki and his wife Dianna as they minister to the Roma community of Nagybereg through worship services, Bible study, and tutoring children. He is involved with extending rights to minority groups in Ukraine in education and language.

David works with the Terra Dei Foundation, helping to develop agricultural practices in the region. The foundation houses a model farm, which opens up educational opportunities to local farmers and students, helping them learn new skills and techniques to increase their production of fruits and vegetables.

Anna serves the church as a teacher, and is the principal and founder of Nagybereg Reformed Church Secondary School.

David and Anna have three children: Aron, Daniel, and Juliana.

*Presbyterian Church in Canada

2015: The Year of the Gift Annuity

proVisionaries
Planting seeds of hope.
For generations to come.

Felicity Alexander

A Presbyterian annuitant who has good reasons to celebrate

"Some years ago I attended a couple of Planned Giving seminars and, after discussions with my son—who is a CA and a Chartered Financial Analyst—I decided that a gift annuity would allow me to leave something to my church when I die, but still enjoy the benefit of income from the money while I am alive. So that's like having my cake and eating it, too. Here's what happened...

"In January 2010, I wrote a cheque for $20,000 to the Trustee Board of The Presbyterian Church in Canada and got an immediate charitable donation receipt for $5,600. I receive $1,070 in income from the annuity every year, and, thanks to the CRA, the taxable portion of that annual amount is so small that there's nothing to pay. It's a win-win situation!"

The above words are adapted from a presentation Felicity Alexander made to her home congregation, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, in Brampton, Ontario, on the benefits of gift annuities for both donors and the church.

To learn how you can have your cake and it too, contact Sheryl in the Planned Giving Office for a free, no-obligation gift annuity quote.

What will your legacy be?

The Presbyterian Church in Canada
50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, ON M3C 1J7
ssutton@presbyterian.ca • 1-800-619-7301 ext. 265
presbyterian.ca/pg

The above example is for illustrative purposes only. Gift annuity rates are subject to change.

Mission In Action

Mission Report 2014
Michael Cheng-tek Tai
Associate Missionary
Taiwan

This past year, 2014, was a year of much travelling. The Quangdong Medical College invited me to give lectures in China in March and again in November. I also represented the National Taiwan Biobank and visited Biobank UK in April and reported on Taiwan's Biobank in November at its international conference. During the summer months, I returned home to Saskatoon and also visited the Maritimes for the first time in my life. In November, The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan held a retreat for their international missionaries working in Taiwan where I was asked to give a message and lead the Sunday Worship, in Northern Taiwan. I also preach once a month at a church without a minister in Changhua County, about a one-hour drive from where I live. I was really a busy man, but I enjoyed my work.

The missionaries serving in Taiwan (November 2014)

Officially, China does not allow any foreigner to preach the Christian gospel. Many people, however, want to know about Jesus. Guangdang Medical College in China realizes the importance of medical humanities in medical education and wants to develop a curriculum for its students. So, I was invited to share my experience in teaching medical humanities. I started my lecture by introducing Dr. James Maxwell of Scotland, the first medical missionary to southern Taiwan and Dr. George Leslie Mackay, the first Canadian missionary to northern Taiwan. I talked about how they decided to leave their comfortable living to go to the underdeveloped island of Taiwan to share their love of God to those who didn't know of His salvation.

Before I started my second lecture, I was asked by the college authority to refrain from mentioning my Christian faith. I respected this request but said that if anyone was interested in knowing more of my faith, they were welcome to talk to me after the lecture. I did make a great connection during this time.

During my summer holidays, I returned to Saskatoon. I was happy to see my family and grandchildren,

two boys and two girls. They remind me that I am no longer a young man. Since I had never visited Eastern Canada, I decided to fly to the Maritimes for a visit. The Rev. Dr. Cho, a retired minister of the PCC, and Mrs. Joan Cho, Editor of the Presbyterian Message of The Atlantic Mission Society (AMS), kindly provided hospitability to me. Dr. and Mrs. Cho were willing to play the role of minister's minister, and I am grateful for that. Mrs. Cho also organized a gathering for me to meet and talk to the local AMS members. It was an enriching occasion where I shared my work. I had never been to Eastern Canada and the beauty of the Acadian seashore impressed me very much.

Outside the church in Tianchung

The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan organized an international missionaries' retreat in Taiwan in November which gave me the chance to see my fellow Canadian missionaries again. The Siverns and Louise Gamble were also present. We had a wonderful fellowship.

I still teach bioethics and medical humanities to medical students in Taiwan. My university has asked me to stay on and I am glad that I can still witness for Christ not only to students, but also to preach at some churches from time to time. One of the faculty members, who attends our Bible study, was baptized just three months ago. The Holy Spirit is indeed working quietly with us.

The Tian Tiong church where I preach at least once a month is located in a rural area. Its Sunday attendance remains around 160 despite the fact they have no pastor at the moment. This church runs a kindergarten that brings in much revenue and is also a form of outreach. They employ eight teachers and although not all of them are Christians, they have attended the church worship quite regularly. The church has also hosted events for the students' parents, and some have started attending church regularly.

I like to take this opportunity to thank the many congregations, and the Atlantic Mission Society and Women's Missionary Society back home for sending me cards at Christmas and Easter. Your encouragement and prayer are much

appreciated. May Our Lord richly bless you in the way He knows best.

Thanks be to God for His steadfast love endures forever.

The Cariboo Presbyterian Church (Highlights from Northern Lights, The Official Newsletter of The Cariboo Presbyterian Church)

From Bruce Wilcox:

As I write this, Dave and Linda Webber are in the midst of processing big changes in their lives as they step into retirement from many of the more specific routines and kinds of ministry they have been doing here for so many years, and into some much needed and deserved rest.

As I ponder the house churches and other worshipping communities of faith and outreach ministries all over the place from Punchaw to Bridge Lake, I'm reminded that it all really began as a result of something like "a nagging cough that just wouldn't go away," as Dave himself described it. Something that started so small, with just a couple of people over 25 years ago, when God planted this calling, this dream, this vision, in Dave and Linda's hearts, to minister with the love of Christ in rural and remote areas in the Cariboo-Chilcotin region, to those beyond the reach of the traditional church. And these rural areas include entire villages that these days seem to be experiencing more and more the disappearance of any kind of visible or organized Christian witness that once upon a time was there for some of them.

What Dave and Linda knew then, the rest of us who have been called to be a part of now—that this heart's desire and this vision was, and is, God-given. So, we pay tribute and honour and give thanks to Dave and Linda Webber for their many years of faithful dedication and hard work here, in season and out of season, through the smooth times, if there ever was such a thing, and through trials and difficult times. And the leadership, wisdom, encouragement, and valuable teaching and mentoring of so many along the way. And we want to thank God for his vision and the gifts he has given them.

And in light of all this, I want to remind and encourage all of us that God has a plan and a vision for every single one of us in Christ! He wants to use us ordinary people in extraordinary ways. Let's be praying always, just as Paul did to, " be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." (Colossians 1:9) In other words, let's respond to that "nagging cough" that comes from God.

A huge 'thank you' to everyone here and across the country that has become part of the Lord's work here with us, through your prayers, gifts, and support. We are always in need of that, and confident the Lord will enable all of us to carry on his vision and work here through all of

you, as we depend on his agenda, sufficiency, and grace. Our prayers are for his richest blessings on you all.

From Jon Wyminga

The year 2014 was one of significant milestones in the mission here in the Cariboo. 2014 marked 25 years since the Cariboo House Church Ministry began, way back in 1989. As such, it also marked 25 years since Dave and Linda Webber began their dedication here. It also marked 20 years since Shannon and I arrived on the scene, having joined this ministry when it was only five years old. What a whirlwind of adventure it has been since then.

This past year was also one of significant transitions and losses. Two of our elders passed into God's presence in 2014. Paul Mathura had served as a faithful elder in Lac La Hache until he moved to Prince George several years ago, and Mary Krajczar, who I believe was the first elder elected from among the house churches. When we arrived, Mary was already in place, and graciously welcomed us to the Cariboo by letting us stay in their house when we first arrived (they were on holidays).

In 2014, Shannon and I also took a four-month leave of absence. After 20 years in the Cariboo, we felt we needed a time of rest and refreshment, particularly in light of the transitions that were yet to come. The biggest was that Dave and Linda would be retiring. We are deeply grateful to them and to God for their 25 years of dedicated and faithful service. We have been richly blessed by them and we wish them God's blessings in their retirement.

Some communities in the Northern Cariboo have also faced significant changes in 2014. First Nations elder Rosie Cassam, once a host of our Nazko House Church, was admitted to a nursing home. And the First Nations villages of Red Bluff (Lhtako), Nazko (Ndazk'oh), and Kluskus (Lhoozk'uz) together lost five elders in the Fall of 2014, followed by a sixth in January and a seventh in February 2015. Many are still dealing with the grief.

Yet, we carry on with the mission we believe God has called us to from our very beginnings back in 1989, "to reach out with the love of Jesus Christ to people who live beyond the traditional church in the rural and remote areas of the Cariboo-Chilcotin region."

Overseas Staff Birthdays

May

26 – Pauline Brown, India

June

1 – Louise Gamble, Taiwan

July

2 – Juan Diego VanWissen-Zuniga, Nicaragua

11 – Jeremy Alexander VanWissen-Zuniga, Nicaragua

In the Society

Presbyterial

A warm welcome, and hot coffee and muffins, greeted us as we arrived at Knox, Guelph, on the morning of February 9 for the annual meeting of the **Waterloo-Wellington** Presbyterial.

The Rev. Johan Olivier welcomed us on behalf of Knox, Guelph, and Lois Stockton conducted the opening worship service.

President Dr. Wilma Welsh constituted the business meeting and committee reports were read and accepted. Once again, Treasurer Helen Cleghorn's report showed the generosity and commitment of our members in supporting the work of the national WMS as well as sending knitted pneumonia prevention vests and caps for newborn babies in India.

Our guest speaker, the Rev. Linda Ashfield, of Knox Waterloo, shared some spiritual reflections on her six-week trip to China, where she taught English with the Amity Foundation. Rev. Ashfield painted a fascinating word picture of China. It was reassuring to hear that Christianity is alive and well in China, and is flourishing despite the past history of repression and the ongoing observation by the government there.

Then, Rev. Ashfield conducted the installation of officers for 2015, and the meeting adjourned with prayer. Delicious hot soups were served before we ventured out into the cold again, grateful for both the food and the warm fellowship of the WMS.

On February 21, **East Toronto** Presbyterial held its 100th Annual Meeting at St. Andrew's Church in Scarborough. Despite a snowstorm, we received a spiritual blessing with Historian Irma Smith's worship on Focus. She opened with the question, "If we are so connected by technology, why do so many people feel so disconnected?" and went on to say that with so many distractions it is easy to lose our Christian focus but God's line of communication is always available.

The Rev. Priscilla Anderson introduced our guest speaker, Joy Randall, who served in Taiwan for 35 years and is currently the CNOB Synodical President. The Canadian Mission in Taiwan began with the Rev. Dr. George Leslie MacKay in 1872 and the first women missionaries were sent to Formosa in 1905. Joy was appointed by the WMS in 1969 to work as a nurse at Changhua Christian Hospital, and in 1976 she became Director of Nursing until 2004 when she returned to Canada.

In 2006, Joy Randall and Wilma Welsh were part of a group that attended the 90th Anniversary of the

Tam Kang High School in Tamsui that also honoured the WMS women, who had taught at this school prior to 1975. The building was designed and constructed by the Rev. Dr. William Gauld in 1916 and Mrs. Gauld began the first girls' school in Taiwan. Both Joy and Wilma took part in the unveiling of a new monument dedicated and placed in front of the old school to honour the Rev. Dr. William Gauld and Mrs. Gauld.

She returned to Taiwan in 2012 for the 90th Anniversary celebrations of the Women's Ministry, along with Betty Siverns, Joan Smith, and Wilma Welsh.

Her most recent trip was in November 2014, when she attended the 118th Anniversary of Changhua Christian Hospital as well as a special celebration to honour Dr. David Landsborough III by the Neurological Department of the Hospital. Changhua Christian Hospital, which had about 100 beds when Joy began there, now has over 1500 beds; and there are six branch hospitals in the area, which includes a long-term psychiatric hospital. Thus, they have a total of 4000 beds with a staff of 8000. Since they constitute one of the top medical centres in Taiwan, they have an active outreach and mission program to service other hospitals in Papua New Guinea, Vietnam, Malawi, and the Caribbean Islands.

In April, Joy will be part of a delegation accompanying the Moderator of the 140th General Assembly, the Rev. Dr. Stephen Farris and his wife, to attend the 150th Anniversary of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (which began in southern Taiwan with the arrival of Dr. James Maxwell from the Church of England/Scotland in 1865).

Following the business of receiving reports, the officers were installed by Tori Smit, CNOB Regional Minister for Faith Formation.

The Presbyterial of **Lanark-Renfrew** met for their Annual Meeting in Arnprior on February 14. President Lois Patchell opened the meeting with prayer and the WMS purpose was repeated.

The Rev. David Hooper welcomed everyone to Arnprior and used the theme, Live Your Love, for the devotion. He told the story of St. Valentine, which is said to have been the origin of sending valentines. He stressed how Jesus showed us how to 'love our neighbour' by reaching out to others. In keeping with the theme we sang, I am so Glad that Jesus loves me and Freely, freely. We were also blessed with a beautiful song, Come back to me, sung unaccompanied by Debra Hooper.

Mary-Lynn McConnachie introduced our guest speaker, Margot Aubert, who had been on a mission trip to Ethiopia with the Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB), a Canadian

organization involving 15 churches, including the Presbyterian Church through PWS&D, and it also receives some support from our government. CFGB is rooted in the belief that humankind is created in the image of God, and it is God's will that no one should go hungry. The CFGB works with locals in 40 different countries helping them become self-sufficient.

After a wonderful lunch, the afternoon session began with a hymn sing. Beth MacIntyre from Carleton Place led us in prayer for international issues, our country, and our local communities and churches. Betty Fraser-Smith read an In Memoriam for the late Sadie Humphries from Arnprior. Shirley Gardiner placed flowers of various colours in a vase as Betty related how each one represented the attributes of faith, hope, love, joy, and hospitality that help us in our life's journey.

Synodical President, Irene Nesbitt, then installed the officers of the 2015 Executive.

Joan thanked Lois for her term as president and also the Arnprior women for their hospitality. Mary-Lynn announced the closing hymn, Lord whose love, to be sung as our own personal prayer.

The Women's Missionary Society of **Brockville** Presbyterial met on January 25 at Knox Presbyterian, Morrisburg, for their Annual Meeting. The Theme was Burst Out in Mission and Marjorie Thom was the pianist.

President Janet Jones welcomed everyone and opened the meeting with prayer and then we sang, Jesus calls us here to meet Him.

We began worship with, This is the day, and then Donna McIlveen read Luke 5:1–11, which reminded us that God is able to take ordinary people and turn them into extra-ordinary people who follow Him. Irene Nesbitt, Synodical president, then brought greetings.

We then had a discussion in small groups, using the study, Be Bold from Glad Tidings. We explored ways on how we can be more vibrant and friendlier in our churches and groups.

Margaret Reynolds introduced our afternoon speaker, Gail McCooeye, from the Amazing Grannies, a group which raises funds for the Stephen Lewis Foundation to support Grandmothers in Africa who nurture orphaned children as a result of AIDS. Her group collects scrap metal to raise funds to buy tents, mosquito nets, soap, sleeping mats, water, and other household needs. She has visited Uganda and Kenya to deliver these supplies. They also donated a brick maker, which is important for building floors and walls for homes. She also praised the Foodgrains Bank for supplying seeds and knowledge that worked to extend the growing season and increase the yield.

The Rev. Marianne Emig Munro installed the 2015 officers.

Dorothy Neal

Dorothy Eliza Isabella Neal (nee Taylor) passed away, into the loving arms of our Lord, on January 23, 2015. Predeceased by her loving husband Allan Neal (1994). Cherished mother of Bonnie Arbour (Don), Bill Neal, Janet Stewart (John), and Laurie Simpson. Dorothy was a loving Grandmother and Great Grandmother and will be dearly missed by her nine grandchildren, Paula (Steve), Michelle (Trevor), Heather (Zvonimir), Scott, Jason (Ubay), Allasan (Mike), Alaina (Johan), Chris and Alysia (Matt), and five great grandchildren, plus one on the way.

Dorothy was a registered nurse. She was an elder at Laurel Lea St Matthews Church, Sarnia, and Past Provincial Board Director of the Women's Institute, Past President of Hamilton and London Synodical WMS, served on the National WMS Council Executive, and was very active in the Sarnia Presbyterial. Dorothy was also a member of Sarnia Chapter # 6 OES, a member of the Sarnia Humane Society, and the Sarnia Horticultural Society. Dorothy was a committed volunteer at the Inn of the Good Shepherd and served as nurse for many years at Camp Kintail. She was honoured by the Sertoma Club of Sarnia as Woman of the Year in 1972 and later named to Mayor Mike Bradley's honour list.

A beautiful service was led by Rev. Janine Dekker on January 27, 2015 at Laurel Lea St Matthew's Presbyterian Church in Sarnia. Dorothy's loving Christian spirit will remain with all who knew and loved her.

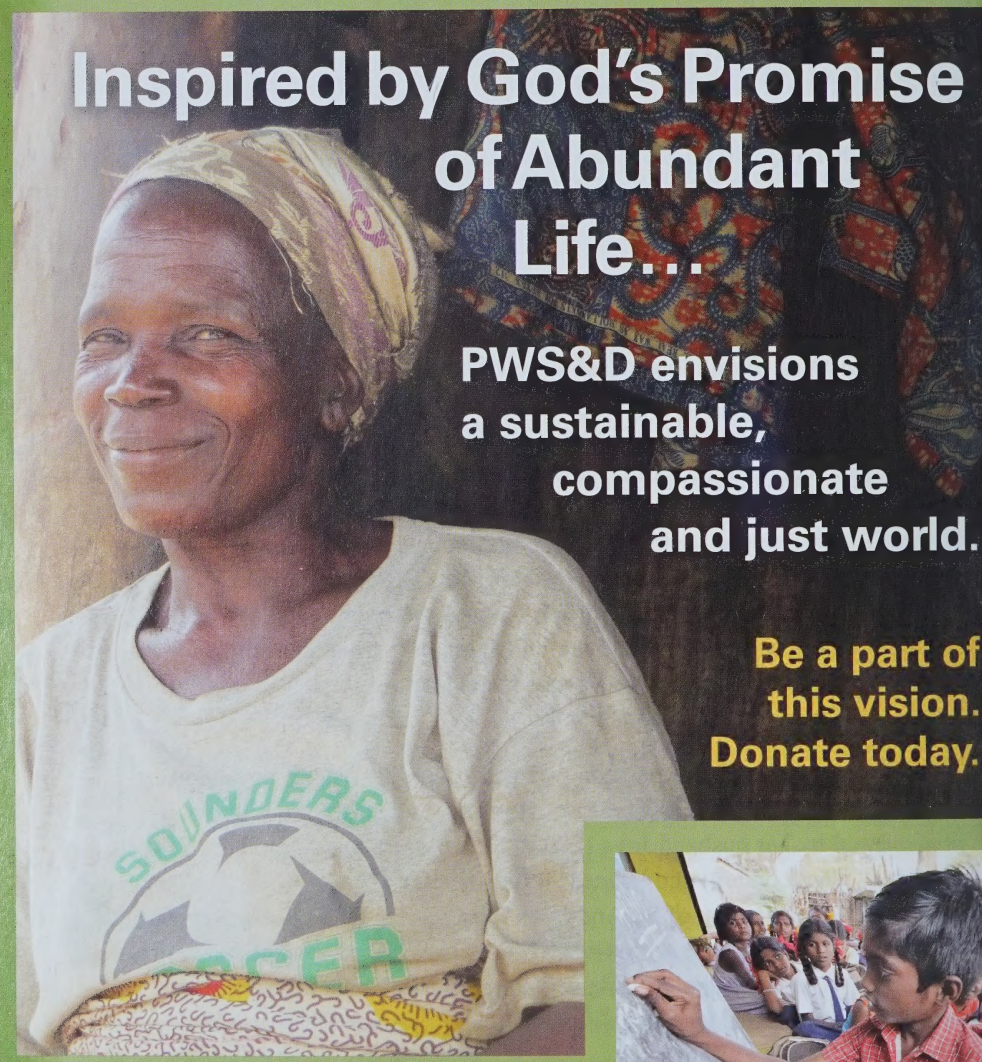
Helen McLeish

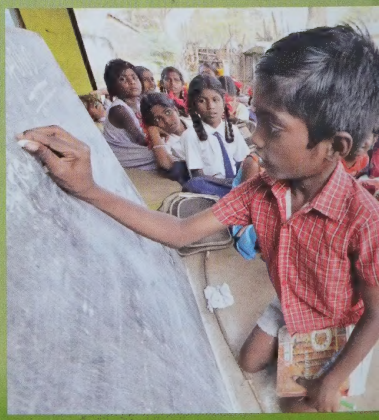
Helen Marion McLeish passed away peacefully on Wednesday, January 21, 2015, at the Niagara-On-The-Lake Hospital, at the age of 83. She was predeceased by her husband John (2007). Helen was a loving mother of Sheila (Toronto), Ian (London) and Bruce (St. Catharines).

Helen was a member of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. She served the WMS for many years and served as an officer in local, provincial and national Women's Missionary Society. She served the WMS Council Executive as national treasurer. She was also a former Regent Newark Chapter IODE and a Rotary Paul Harris Fellow.

A service celebrating Helen's life was held at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Niagara-on-the-Lake on Saturday, January 24, 2015, with interment following in the churchyard.

WE RESPOND


Inspired by God's Promise of Abundant Life...
PWS&D envisions a sustainable, compassionate and just world.
Be a part of this vision. Donate today.



Presbyterian World Service & Development

50 Wynford Drive,
Toronto, ON M3C 1J7
1-800-619-7301 ext. 291
WeRespond.ca

The Journey
by Susan McLennan

"I do hope to see you on my journey and to be sent on by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a little while." Romans 15:24

As I begin my term as President of the Women's Missionary Society, it was suggested that an introduction would be in order! It is difficult to convey one's life story to date, so I will explain it in terms of a journey.

I was raised in Manotick ON at Knox Presbyterian Church. Manotick is a historic village, which is now part of the greater Ottawa area, although it retains its village personality. My parents, grandparents, and extended family were all very involved in all aspects of church life.

My interest in music began at an early age—I was singing in the children's choir which my mother directed before I could read! I have been singing in, and sometimes directing, adult and children's choir ever since. Mark and I have sung in community choirs in Nova Scotia, Thunder Bay, and here in Woodstock.

My husband Mark and I met at PYPS, not uncommon back in the 1970s! Our Journey together began in Wabush Labrador where we spent our honeymoon (!) and then to Montreal as Mark finished his education at Presbyterian College. Mark was ordained in 1978 and our Mission Appointment was to Willowdale, Valley Centre and West Park (Red Deer) Alberta. What a learning time we had during our four years in Alberta—we still have friends there.

The next part of our Journey was to rural Nova Scotia, where we ministered for 18 wonderful years at Bethel Church, Scotsburn. During our time there, I was honored to become a Life Member of the AMS (Atlantic Mission Society). We felt the Call to leave our church family there and moved to First Church, Thunder Bay ON. The main focus of our eight years in Thunder Bay was Refugee Ministry—what a glorious and rewarding part of the Journey that was!

Although my mother was an expert seamstress, I did not start sewing until we lived in Scotsburn. The ladies there taught me to quilt. The creative process of choosing colours and combinations is still something I love to do. The biggest problem, of course, is not having enough time to work on all the projects which are waiting in line—

contrary to Mark's opinion I do finish many of them! There are just always two or three more in the queue.

In 2008, Mark and I again felt the Call for change and we are currently ministering at Knox, Woodstock ON. Life is very busy in our current pastoral charge!

Gardening was another passion that I developed when we lived in Scotsburn. My friends and I called ourselves "Companion Planters" and we learned together. After moving to Woodstock, I decided to pursue my Master Gardener diploma. After four years of courses, and a week of summer school in Truro (Nova Scotia), I graduated from Dalhousie University with my Master Gardener diploma in 2013.

My professional life (the work I get paid for) has been in accounting and administration. When we moved to Woodstock, I 'stepped out of the box' and worked for a time for the Victorian Order of Nurses in the Adult Day Program. The Day Program is a recreational/respite time for seniors and adults with disabilities. I found this to be a rewarding experience.

I almost forgot to mention my historic Reading Club! *The Tuesday Reading Club* in Woodstock will be celebrating 120 years of existence in 2016, and it even has a constitution. I am honored to be part of this group of amazing women from whom I am

constantly learning.

As a minister's wife (old school!), I have always been involved in the life of our congregations, primarily in the areas of children and youth, women's organizations, and music. My friend once asked me if I "had to" take part in all these areas and I explained to her that these were activities I love to participate in, and would be doing even if I weren't the wife of the current minister.

The important thing about any journey is to be open to the new experience, to be able to adjust to the unexpected, and yes, sometimes to risk something new.

Ruby MacLeod
WMS Burlington East
Burlington ON

Janet Perkins
First Presbyterian Church, WMS
Edmonton AB

Aldine Sinclair
Jean Beare
Betty Turner
St. James Presbyterian, Stouffville ON

Jean Forest
WMS, Queen Street East Presbyterian,
Toronto ON

Mark and I enjoy the Star Trek series of television shows and movies. At the end of the Voyager series, the characters are anticipating their return home after seven years of being lost in another part of space. They discuss that they are about to reach "their destination" after a long journey, when Harry speaks up and corrects them: *"Our journey was not to a destination, the journey is the destination."* After a moment, the characters all raised their glasses to toast, "To the journey!"

Robert L. Short also discusses journeys in the book, *The Parables of Dr Seuss*. Short suggests that there are many parallels between Paul's letter to the Ephesians, and the Dr. Seuss story "Oh, the Places You'll Go!" Much of the message that both Paul and Dr. Seuss are passing along deals with the kind of mission we must be on if we really expect to go places. In this sense, "the mission is the message."

To quote Short:

So whether we are talking about "Christian" in Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, or the nameless little pilgrim in Dr Seuss's Oh, the Places You'll Go! or just the pilgrimage of the ordinary Christian, there will always be plenty of problems to be faced. But both Dr. Seuss and Paul tell us to hike confidently as far as we need to face up to our problems.

And will we succeed? Yes! We will indeed! 98 and ¾ percent guaranteed.

You're off to Great Places!
Today is your day!
Your mountain is waiting.
So...get on your way!
And oh the places you'll go![i]

I look forward to our Journey together!

---

[i] Short, Robert L. The Parables of Dr. Seuss, Westminster John Knox Press, 2008, p. 18

Walk in solidarity on Sunday, May 31, 2015. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission will host a walk in the Ottawa-Gatineau region.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Closing Event Ottawa May 31–June 3

Justice Ministries will provide updates on the TRC's activities in Ottawa on the church's website. Prayer resources now available!

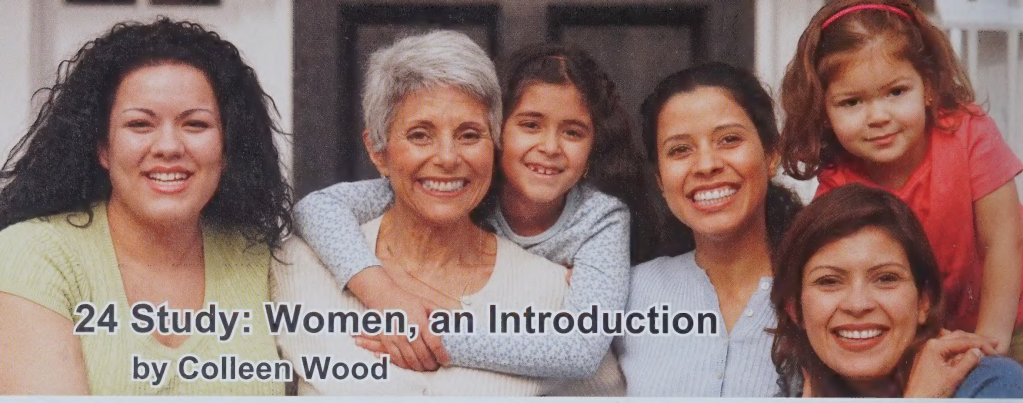
presbyterian.ca/healing

PM40013283 R9517

Please report any errors/changes in address

Glad Tidings

July/August 2015



24 Study: Women, an Introduction
by Colleen Wood

Contents

IN THIS ISSUE

3 **Editorial**

4 **Beloved Child of God**
by Barbara-Anne Smith

9 **Good News for Bad Apples**
by Kristine O'Brien

10 **Still**
by Maureen E. Kowal

12 **WMS Council 2015: Seize the Hope**
by Colleen Wood

22 **Council's Morning Watch**
by Laurie Deacon

31 **Reconciliation Should Happen**
by Colleen Wood

33 **Boarding Home Ministry**
by Rachel Burnet

35 **Roma Study: Update**

37 **Mission In Action**

IN THE SOCIETY

43 **In the Society**

47 **Remembering**

Glad Tidings

July/August 2015

Volume 91, No. 4

EDITOR: Colleen Wood

DESIGN: Alexis McKeown

Published six times a year by the Women's Missionary Society of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Member of the Canadian Church Press.

Canada

Glad Tidings reports on aspects of the Women's Missionary Society on all levels. *Glad Tidings* challenges concerned Christians to reflect on their faith through articles and reports related to mission and social justice issues, locally, nationally, and internationally. *Glad Tidings* through its content, encourages readers to become informed, educated, inspired, and motivated to action. *GladTidings* provides a forum for a broad spectrum of opinion and information, thus the views expressed in features, news reports, letters, and book reviews are not necessarily endorsed by the WMS or by the Editor.

2015 subscription rate $15.00 plus applicable taxes: ON, NB, NL $16.95, NS $17.25, BC, AB, SK, MB, QC, $15.75, PE $17.10. WMS members are asked to send subscriptions through their group *Glad Tidings* Secretary. Individual subscribers may order direct from *Glad Tidings*. Please make all cheques and money orders payable at par to *Glad Tidings*.

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to the circulation department at 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, Ontario M3C 1J7. Phone 416-441-1111; 800-619-7301.
E-mail gladtidings@presbyterian.ca. ISSN: 00170720.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund (CPF) for our publishing activities.

Editorial

I am rarely at a loss for words, but as I went to write my editorial this month, I felt lost for what to say. So, I took my inspiration from our purpose statement, which I love:

The Women's Missionary Society (WMS) is a community of Christians whose purpose, in response to the love of God in Jesus Christ, is to encourage one another and all the people of the church to be involved in local and world mission through prayer, study, service, and fellowship.

I encourage you to let these words inspire you throughout the summer. Read this purpose statement often and look for ways to incorporate it into your life.

Pray: I know many of you pray regularly, but maybe for the summer, find a new way to pray or a different time or place to pray. Take a morning walk and pray during this time. Thank God for his beautiful creation, pray for your neighbours as you pass their homes, and pray for the church communities you pass. Stop and sit on a park bench and take time to listen to God.

Study: Again, so many of you are faithful in your study time with God, but why not take your study time outside for a change. Perhaps, find a new devotional book or focus on a book of the Bible you often avoid. Buy a new translation of the Bible to see if the different language teaches you in new ways.

Service: Many of us take a break from service in the summer. Even many of our WMS groups stop meeting. This can sometimes lead to opportunities. If you don't regularly teach Sunday School, this is the perfect time to give some of the regular teachers a break. Many churches also need extra leadership for their Vacation Bible Camps. Maybe your local food bank or mission also needs help in the summer when their regular volunteers are on vacation.

Fellowship: Summer can be a great time to connect with friends. Invite a friend to join you for an evening walk. Invite someone over to have a coffee on your balcony. Maybe meet up to help a neighbour weed their garden. Perhaps start a new tradition of vacationing with a friend, or hosting a reunion of friends, classmates, or family.

Beloved child OF GOD

by Barbara-Anne Smith

My name, to those who know me best, is Babs. To begin, I am a woman who plays many roles in my life, as do many of you I'm sure. I am a wife to my husband James, a mother to my 19-year-old daughter Reighan and my 5-year-old son Ethan, a sister, a friend, an activist of sorts, and probably many other things too.

In the last number of years, however, I am newly aware of, and exploring more deeply, my role as a child of God. Though I have been a Christian all of my life, and have attended church for most of my life, I never really identified myself as a child of God, nor did I spend much time reflecting upon my relationship with Him in any kind of substantive way.

I was born into a large family, the youngest child and fourth daughter in a blended family of six children. My parents were "older." My mom was 33 and my father, a World War II vet, was 48-years-old, when I was born. As the youngest, and a girl, I was relatively sheltered and protected. Church and faith have been a part of my life and my belief in God, though sometimes challenged, has never really faltered. My faith is a gift from my mother, with whom I regularly attended church. After my mother passed away when I was 16, my faith, over time, became a cherished, intimate connection to her in her absence. Though I never stopped believing in God, for a number of years after her passing, through my early adult life, I experienced some inner conflict and confusion around the role of the "church" in my life and moved away from attending any church.

Even as I reflect on that time, during the most painful moments of my life, God was working on me, though seemingly in secret. I am an incest survivor, having been abused from the time I was 10 until I left home at age 17. In the year following my mother's death, I fled my home when the abuse escalated and I then proceeded to file criminal charges against my father and embarked upon a two to three year long court process. Had you asked me at the time, I would have said that I felt

abandoned by God and profoundly disappointed by my faith community. Upon reflection, however, it was my Youth Minister who contacted my family when I confided that the abuse was escalating and I felt suicidal. It was God handling all the details of support and strength, including sending the right people at exactly the right times—angels, if you will.

Later, I married in the church and had my first child baptized because God remained important to me. I just didn't know how to connect with Him in my everyday life. My first marriage was short-lived and, after it ended, there were the struggles and pain of moving forward and re-framing a life that I never expected as a single-parent. Throughout this time, I attempted to make connections again with the church, largely because I felt that I should provide my daughter with the same experiences that my mother had given me, but I was unable to find a new church home.

It wasn't until much later, in 2008, when my faith journey really changed course and started down the path that led to where I am today. When James and I lost our first and second pregnancies together, I began to feel the nudge to reconnect with my faith in order to garner strength in my grief, but also to connect in some way with my mom, whose comfort I was desperately craving. Around the same time, my neighbour was tragically murdered in her home and I received an invitation to a vigil in her honour at a United Church near my home. There I met a wonderful minister, who embodied the very spirit of what I was looking for in a faith leader. Compassionate, intelligent, progressive, and somewhat rebellious, she and I became friends and I remained at her church until her departure. She baptized my son; she officiated at my marriage to James; and she became yet another of God's angels in my life as she bridged my transition from reconnecting with my faith through my personal epiphany and into my spiritual awakening and the knowledge of being God's child.

In December 2012, my then-two-year-old son Ethan became ill with the flu. One night, knowing deep down in the place where mothers know things that my son was dangerously ill, I took him to the hospital. A very focused, purposeful determination had developed inside me that no husband or family doctor could dissuade. God took me on a road trip in order to meet some very special angels who would teach me some extraordinary lessons that I will never forget. He took me to Brampton Civic Hospital where I encountered apathy. He then

took me to William Osler Hospital in Georgetown where I encountered compassion and validation in the form of a doctor who confirmed my suspicion that my son did indeed have very serious pneumonia. By this time though, I would not receive just the antibiotics I was seeking because my son now needed hospitalization.

Because Georgetown does not have a paediatric unit, God led us to Oakville Trafalgar where we encountered brilliance and further validation in the form first of a nurse, then a paediatrician who recognized just how very ill my son really was, and together they were also wise enough to realize that they were not equipped to care for him. From there, God led us to Sick Kids Hospital in Toronto. Here, we encountered even more of His grace because we arrived just in the nick of time to catch another brilliant doctor, who recognized that our son was in respiratory distress bordering on respiratory failure and who compassionately, yet very firmly, convinced me to trust her to care for our son by placing him on a respirator and inserting what would be the first of three chest tubes in order to alleviate his suffering, drain the fluid around his collapsing lungs, and begin the long road to recovery.

The question presented was, "What would you say to God if you could?" So I thanked God...

Our son had a complex, complicated form of pneumonia caused by streptococcus pneumonia, a ubiquitous and savage bacteria that children are normally protected from by a vaccine, but in our son, again unbeknownst to us, that vaccine had failed and he now, after three weeks of illness, had a lung 90% full of pneumonia, pleural effusion—fluid—in the sac around his lungs, ear and blood infections, and his condition was getting more serious by the moment.

In a complete state of fear, exhaustion, and desperation, I took a leap of faith, literally. Normally quite private, maybe even—dare I say it, ashamed—of my faith, I asked in public, out loud, on Facebook, for people to pray, meditate, or do whatever it was they did, for my son because I did not know what else to do and needed their help and support. I also messaged the minister that I mentioned earlier and asked her to come to the hospital to pray with me, as I had no one else to pray with and didn't feel that I knew how to well enough by myself. God, again, sent her to me on what would be the single scariest day in the hospital for Ethan and for us.

The chest tubes and meds were not working, his lungs were bleeding, and his tiny body was too weak to fight

back convincingly. With my daughter and my minister by my side all day long, I prayed and begged and cried and prayed some more and somehow, Ethan made it through that day and I learned how to pray, with a little help from my friends.

For two more weeks, I lived in the hospital with Ethan. All the while, I experienced a calm and a fortitude unlike anything I had ever experienced before in my life. I am not exaggerating when I say that I felt God in me, managing my emotions, giving me the words and patience that I needed to communicate with a multitude of doctors and other formidable medical professionals. Ethan is a treasured miracle, as are all children I know, but after two miscarriages and fertility treatments necessary to achieve a viable, healthy pregnancy, he is a special kind of miracle to us and his loss would understandably be uniquely devastating. My husband was in a rage at doctors, who had failed to take the necessary steps to diagnose Ethan sooner, and my daughter was terrified that her brother was really in a coma and that we were lying to her about his true condition. Normally, in those circumstances, I would be emotional pudding. But I had God and a strength that seemed superhuman in the moment. I was comforting not only my family, but the friends and other family that came to support us and who were taken aback at the appearance and condition of the boy that they knew to be vital and energetic and spirited!

On the day that we took Ethan home to finish his recovery, I vividly remember emerging from the underground parking lot of the hospital and feeling COMPELLED to go to church the next day, no matter what happened or what state Ethan was in. I knew that James would be perfectly capable for a couple of hours and I knew as well that I needed to begin to process what had been happening to me and I needed an anonymous place to cry, if I was finally able to cry.

It turned out that the church that I went to that Sunday, that I had only been to once before, was closing out a sermon series entitled "Deepening Your Relationship with God." We were invited to write a letter to God during the worship service. The question presented was, "What would you say to God if you could?" So, I thanked God for restoring my son. I promised Him that I would live my gratitude every day and I asked Him to bear with me while I figured it out because I didn't know what that looked like yet—at all!

Tragically, about a month later, we woke up one morning to the unimaginable news of nine-year-old Kesean Williams, murdered in his own home, in our neighbourhood. I received a beautiful email from our

new minister in the wake of Kesean's passing, which allowed for hope and gave opportunities to respond. I did. They were looking for a bus driver. I, being a school bus driver then, seized the opportunity, in my opinion offered by God in response to my promise, and offered to drive a bus for my new church in an attempt to live my gratitude. And from one small response to one small need, came innumerable gifts and blessings! Thus began my metamorphic journey, according to God's plan for me. It has been raw and hard and beautiful and it has led right here.

That invitation and that promise to God has literally changed my entire relationship with Him and with my day-to-day life. I don't believe that it is an accident that God led me to a church and a congregation that is so committed to and engaged in walking the way of Jesus. I have experienced a profound deepening of my faith and of understanding of a relationship with God that has impacted every single aspect of my life.

After considerable reflection and prayer, I have decided to name what happened to me over that three-week period in the hospital as my Epiphany. It was a transformative, defining moment whereby my entire life changed direction. What has developed since is something I like to call "Capital G Gratitude." Soul deep, in-my-bones gratitude that guides me each day and that remains as profound, if not more so, today, than it was on December 29, 2012.

Sometimes, the Editor gets the final word...

... and this time I wish to add my final word to this article. I am honoured to call Babs a friend. I met her at a church play group while our children were pre-schoolers and I have witnessed her transition, her metamorphosis. We continue to worship together in the same faith community. She shares her faith and her time in generous ways. That first step of sharing her skills as a bus driver led to her involvement in the neighbourhood where Keason Williams had lived. She served first as volunteer director of The Journey Neighbourhood Centre in that community, and now serves on their staff. She is committed to reaching out to others and to sharing her story, and I know this beloved child of God, like each of us, will continue to journey forward with Gratitude. To me, I see God in her and her work reaching out to her community and imagining God doing amazing things as she jumps on board.

Good News for Bad Apples

by Kristine O'Brien

At our weekly fresh food bank, we receive a variety of produce, meat, and dairy products. Sometimes they are near their expiry date, other times they are just not quite nice enough to sell. Last week, there were cases and cases of less-than-beautiful apples.

They were a variety of different reds, greens, and yellows. They were pock-marked, bruised, and misshapen. A few were huge, some were tiny, most were in between. We sorted them from the cardboard cases into small bags, with half a dozen in each.

When we spread the food out each week for people to collect, some things are very popular. Meat is always in demand. Milk and cheese are popular. Once we had big Toblerone chocolate bars and they disappeared in no time at all.

But not these apples. By the time all the families had left, taking crackers and vegetables, and meat and juice, there was still a big pile of apples. No one wanted them. So, as sometimes happens, the volunteers disposed of them. I took home four bags.

Today, I unpacked those four bags of terrible-looking, unsellable, unwanted apples. I got out my peeler and knife, and went to work to see what I could do.

Half an hour later, I had an enormous pot of applesauce on the stove that smelled delicious. And in the process, I began to feel good too.

As I peeled and chopped, I realized that every single apple that looked awful had sweet and white

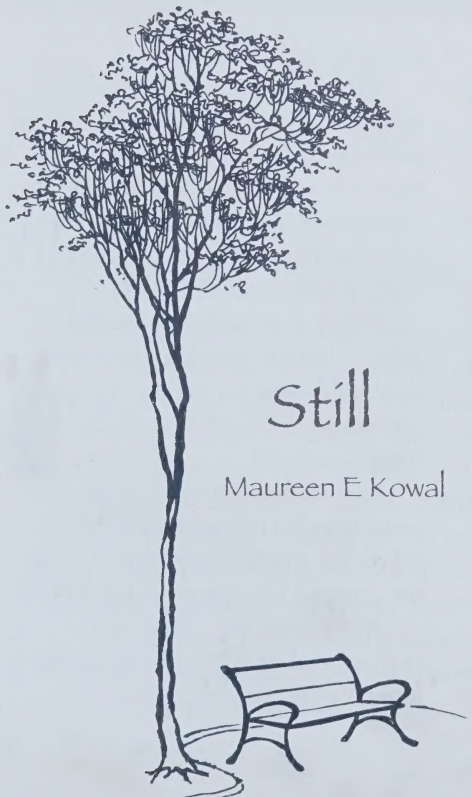
flesh inside it. Every unwanted fruit was put to good use. There wasn't a single apple that had nothing to offer. I may have started with a whole bag of bad apples, but I ended up with dessert. And I love dessert.

It is at the heart of my theology that every one of us is created in God's beautiful image, and that God can redeem absolutely everything. But today it was apples that told me the news I need to hear: no matter what messages the world sends me, I too, am wanted, beautiful, and useful. And if it's true for me then it's true for you too: you are wanted, beautiful, useful.

So here's my advice: the next time you are feeling unsure of yourself, unwanted by someone, or just a little bruised, go to the grocery store, head for the reduced produce section, buy some of the rejected apples, and go home and make applesauce.

It will be good for your soul. I promise.

The Rev. Kristine O'Brien serves the congregation of Trafalgar Presbyterian Church in Oakville. She loves spending time in God's beautiful world and writes for her blog, The Blooming Reverend. She is married to Pat and they have four children.



Still

Maureen E Kowal

Still...
Is where I need to be.
Still...
I feel God
calling me.
Be still.
In the silence,
is where I find.
Comfort and peace
of mind.
My cares seem to
drift away.
God is near.
Not far away.
Close to him,
I will stay.
Still...

2015: The Year of the Gift Annuity

proVisionaries
Planting seeds of hope.
For generations to come.

Felicity Alexander

A Presbyterian annuitant who has good reasons to celebrate

"Some years ago I attended a couple of Planned Giving seminars and, after discussions with my son—who is a CA and a Chartered Financial Analyst—I decided that a gift annuity would allow me to leave something to my church when I die, but still enjoy the benefit of income from the money while I am alive. So that's like having my cake and eating it, too. Here's what happened...

"In January 2010, I wrote a cheque for $20,000 to the Trustee Board of The Presbyterian Church in Canada and got an immediate charitable donation receipt for $5,600. I receive $1,070 in income from the annuity every year, and, thanks to the CRA, the taxable portion of that annual amount is so small that there's nothing to pay. It's a win-win situation!"

The above words are adapted from a presentation Felicity Alexander made to her home congregation, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, in Brampton, Ontario, on the benefits of gift annuities for both donors and the church.

To learn how you can have your cake and it too, contact Sheryl in the Planned Giving Office for a free, no-obligation gift annuity quote.

What will your legacy be?

The Presbyterian Church in Canada
50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, ON M3C 1J7
ssutton@presbyterian.ca • 1-800-619-7301 ext. 265
presbyterian.ca/pg

The above example is for illustrative purposes only. Gift annuity rates are subject to change.

WMS Council 2015: Seize the Hope

by Colleen Wood

Photo: Katherine Allen

Your Women's Missionary Society Council met for their Bi-Annual meeting on May 1–3 at Crieff Hills Conference Centre in Ontario. The theme for the meeting was Seize the Hope, and indeed there was hope throughout the meeting.

Hope for the WMS

The reports for the past two years were received and approved.

Financially, although it is true that our legacy money is getting less, we are continuing to make cuts to get us down to a level where our expenses meet our money coming in. Likely the biggest cut announced was that our donation to The Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC) general fund will be reduced from its

current rate of $150,000 to $100,000 in 2016, and then to $50,000 in 2017. With these cuts made, we will be looking better financially for the future ahead.

Our WMS President, Betty Siverns, reported on her exciting, exhausting, and exhilarating two years as president. Some of the positive experiences she spoke of included the 100th Anniversary of the WMS and the second Women's Gathering, and the Atlantic Mission Society Annual General Meeting.

The program report recounted the passion and faithful dedication of the WMS. Groups continue to meet to study, raise funds, and serve their local communities. Although many face the challenge of aging members, they continue to serve faithfully. Members use a variety of study resources, including *Glad Tidings*, Mission Awareness Sunday materials, guest speakers, and materials prepared by the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada.

In the editorial report, there is thankfulness for many new subscribers, although subscriptions continue to decline. The mission study is well used and members were encouraged to give gift subscriptions to non-WMS members.

The Rev. Dr. Rick Fee gave us an update from the Life and Mission Agency and their hope is in change. Rick talked about how our current church was designed for his grandmother's generation. It was wonderful and created the Canada that we are today, but it seems that the church has not evolved since 1888 and that is sad. Rick encouraged us to find out what we should be doing. He spoke of his successor, the Rev. Ian A. R. McDonald and believes he will do new things within the Life and Mission Agency. The WMS wishes Rick all the best in his retirement.

Two wonderful projects will receive hope as the WMS has chosen two new Together We Can! projects. The Canadian project will be the ARISE ministry, and the international project will be supporting the Maya-Mam of Guatemala. You will learn more about these two amazing projects later in this article.

There was also some hope for the outreach wing of the WMS. The WMS will continue to develop some

Betty McLagan, BC

of the new ideas for Presbyterian Church Women (PCW), but this will be as an outreach of the WMS. This will allow us to reach out to different women and support their faith and mission endeavours in new and exciting ways, including the Presbyterian Women's Gathering.

The one controversial change that was brought to council this year was the possibility of changing our name to The Women's Mission Society. After some discussion, this motion was defeated and we remain The Women's Missionary Society.

What is Hope: Rev. Dr. Pam McCarroll

Our first speaker was the Rev. Dr. Pam McCarroll, Associate Professor of Pastoral Theology and Director of Theological Field Education at Knox College, Toronto. Prior to working at Knox College, Pam served for seven years as a hospital chaplain in the Hamilton area. The theme of hope was very important in that work.

She gave us a great overview of what hope is. We talked about things that give us hope, like spring flowers, blossoms, the gurgling laugh of a young child, birds' singing in the trees, children playing outside your kitchen window, sunshine, telephone calls from a friend, and reconnecting with people. We also talked about what hope is. Things like reliance, expectation, promise, and trust.

Pam explained that in the Bible, there are several Hebrew words connected to hoping and waiting:

Hoping: waiting is expectant (Isaiah 40:31)

Hoping: waiting is related to paying close attention (Psalm 119:166)

Hoping: waiting emphasizes patience and perseverance (Isaiah 30:18)

Hoping: waiting longs for fulfillment (Psalm 31:24).

In the Bible, it is an active hope. There is an active way of waiting with trust.

There is also a movement in hope, where we move from feeling

Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda Synodical at Council

Hope
Waiting
Expectant
Paying attention
Patience
erserverance
Fulfillment

"We [can] practise hope by being mindful of God."

Dineke Kraay, SK

isolated and shut down to opening up. In Biblical hope, we are open to God's larger presence and possibility. There is an emphasis on waiting upon God.

Pam suggested we could practise hope by being mindful of God. She suggested integrating some practices of hope into our everyday life so that we would be more resilient in time of adversity.

Practices of Hope include:

- Connecting with God through prayer, worship, and scripture
- Connecting with community through our church fellowship
- Connecting with God's creation
- Practising gratitude though a journal or in our prayers
- Practising compassion through stewardship and service
- Practising awe
- Practising trust and faith
- Laughter
- Setting Goals.

Hope in your daily life to become more resilient in times of crisis.

Hope in Guatemala: Guy Smagghe and Jennifer Ramkissoon

Guy and Jennifer shared their thoughts about Guatemala and the work involved there by The Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC) and Presbyterian World Service & Development (PWS&D). Guatemala is an important country to the PCC and we have had several staff serving there over the years, including Ken Kim, Denise Van Wissen, and Joe Reed.

In the western highlands of Guatemala, PWS&D is working

Praying Hands
by Kristine O'Brien

We come to be with you and
each other, O God.
Our hands together, stopping us
from
working, playing, driving, or
eating.
We offer you this time.

We make our hands into fists.
Lord, the world you created
is beautiful, but it is also
broken.
We confess our anger,
frustration, stress, and
worry.

We open our hands.
Help us as we let go of
everything that upsets and
unsettles us.
Let our hands and minds, and
even our lives
be open, waiting, and ready for
the gifts you have for us.

We turn our hands over.
Lord, you have given us hands
and fingers to work and
create,
help and hold, build and plant.
Let our hands honour you in
what they do today, and
every day.

We rest our hands in our lap.
To you, O Lord, we offer not
just our hands but our whole
self in all that we do. Amen.

to improve the livelihoods of indigenous women and men through partnerships with groups such as the Maya-Mam Association of Research and Development (AAMID). There are one million Mam, a Mayan indigenous group, in Guatemala, and they have been affected by 36 years of civil war. They face many challenges, such as a lack of arable land, climate change, natural disasters, mining exploration, and environmental degradation.

PWS&D is working with Mam families to increase crop production, build resistance to climate change, and preserve the environment. They are training local agricultural promoters, who are supplied with organic fertilizer, vegetable seeds, tree samplings, and livestock. They share their knowledge and teach new farm techniques to their community.

To see this work first hand, consider joining the WMS trip to Guatemala this Fall!

Hope in our Bible Studies: Rev. Kristine O'Brien

Kristine had us open our time together with a wonderful hand prayer.

Then after reading our theme scripture of Hebrews 6:13–20, Kristine began by saying she had been asked "how come women like you don't come to WMS things?" She said it was hard to answer. The world has changed and most of the women she knows always have a weekend jammed full of things to do. Raising children is different now. Women also work long hours outside as within their homes. There is also Sunday shopping.

She also hears the anxiety, disappointment, frustration, and hopelessness, not only in the WMS, but also in session meetings, as well as in finance and maintenance meetings. She talked of our worry about aging, money, lack of people. She knows those feelings. And she gave us time in our table groups, to talk about our own biggest anxiety in regards to the WMS.

Fun before the campfire, Joan Smith, Katherine Allen, ON

Then she brought us back to this letter to the Hebrews, actually more of a sermon than a letter. And in this sermon, the preacher is talking about an urgent problem—people were exhausted. They were tired. They were tired of serving and being faithful. They were tired of going to church and arguing about church.

Deb Rapport, Arise Ministry

So to inspire them, the preacher reminded them of Abraham. He reminded them of their hero. He reminded them that Abraham patiently endured through the waiting and the exhaustion. Then, he reminded them of the oath that God made—to bless and multiply.

Today, it seems like all the signs are contrary to this oath. Our PCC numbers are declining. WMS groups are closing. But this oath is a serious thing and it left Kristine wondering if her reaction to the numbers was not the best judge of whether this oath was being fulfilled or not. Perhaps, we are being blessed and multiplied in ways we are not used to seeing and counting. Maybe it is not about how many, but who we are. Are we welcoming the poor or the disenfranchised? Are we welcoming those who have never been to church before?

Maybe, our own faith is being blessed and multiplied. When we are scared, we turn to God more readily. It is when we are empty, that it is easier to receive the blessings of God. And this oath is old, and perhaps how we see God today, limits how we react. We want to be blessed and multiplied in our way and our time. Perhaps we are so busy holding on to what we know that we are not able to receive the blessing that God would like to give us. Perhaps God wants us to let go of something so we can seize the hope that he has for us. It is hard to give things up, hard to give up what we love and what brings us comfort, but what might you be willing to give up to receive the blessings of God.

To close, Kristine had each of us create a finger labyrinth which included the words hope and anxious. Using a labyrinth can make silence with God easier and can allow us to be quiet with God as we consider

TOGETHER WE CAN! PROJECTS

• Arise Ministry • Maya-Mam, Guatemala

what makes us anxious and where our hope is.

Finding Hope in Challenges

Southwestern Ontario Syndical at Council

Human Trafficking: June Campbell

Sometimes when we look at the big issues of social justice, it is hard to find the hope. June Campbell spoke about human trafficking and prostitution in Canada.

Since June last spoke to us, Bill C36 has been passed which is designed to target the pimps and buyers of sexual services, and not the prostitutes themselves. This is seen as providing a balance of protecting both prostitutes and their communities. The bill upholds the legalization of selling sex, but now outlaws its purchase, along with many of the activities surrounding it.

ARISE Ministry: Deb Rapport

The Rev. Deb Rapport started by talking about her call to this ministry. She said that her call to this ministry began eight summers ago during her summer placement at Evergreen Centre for Street Youth, between her 2nd and 3rd year of seminary.

During her first week, on her very first shift on the drop-in floor, she was paired with a full-time staff member, Derek. He informed her that they were going to be taking care of a young girl for most of the afternoon, who had come in high on drugs. She came in with no shoes, her skin was tanned even though it was May, and she was wearing an oversized hoodie. She had deep scars from drug use and self-harm, and Deb saw her as a beautiful mess.

After this young women left that day, Deb heard more about her. She was the same age as her, but while Deb would have been a young girl playing with Cabbage Patch Dolls, this girl's mother's pimp had already begun exploiting her, in Canada, in the city where Deb was born. It broke Deb's heart—shattered it—and she needed God to do something about it. This was the beginning of her call to this kind of ministry. She wanted to keep this from happening to any other little girls.

Deb now serves as Community Chaplain and Director of ARISE (Advocacy and Reclaiming those Involved in the Sex-trade through

Empowerment). ARISE offers hope to those involved in the sex trade. ARISE uses street outreach to get to know people, but it does take time and consistency. The outreach workers provide bags to the prostitutes, which include Kleenex, condoms, and hand sanitizer.

They also offer a case management program. This is an intentional journey that they will take with a woman as they work one on one to help her set and meet her goals. Deb has been journeying with one woman for over seven years, since her time at Evergreen. She first met this woman when she was crack-addicted and working on the streets. At first, she avoided Deb but they started to form a relationship. This person would later hide from Deb when she was high and working because she didn't want to be seen like this, until she realized that Deb was not going to judge her. She started meeting with Deb, and after some time, they finally defined some very small, 24–48-hour goals. Later, those became monthly goals like opening a bank account, or getting identification. Finally, she took courses, left the sex trade, and got involved in a relationship. Recently, she contacted Deb again and asked to start case management again. She was pregnant and felt like she needed help to get everything in order. She exceeded every goal she made and Deb was able to be present at the birth of her child. Deb has watched this child grow over the last year, and can reflect back and see such hope.

ARISE hopes to hire full-time staffing in the near future.

Photo: Katherine Allen

Honor Diaries: I will admit to finding it difficult to find much hope in the movie, *Honor Diaries*, which we viewed, but the hope is that this film breaks the silence on 'honor' violence towards women and girls. This film brings together nine women's rights advocates with connections to Muslim majority societies. Together, they explored topics, such as freedom

of movement, forced marriage, and female genital mutilation.

This film is hard to watch, but if there is hope for these women in the future, we should watch it, and speak out.

Hope in Our Laughter

On Saturday evening, we joined for a campfire at Crieff. It was a wonderful evening of laughter, storytelling, games, smores, and singing.

Hope in Our Worship

The Rev. Mark McLennan led a hope-filled worship service for us on Sunday morning. He started by telling us that if we google the word 'hope' we will come up with 1.8 billion hits. If we refine that and google, 'hope in the Bible', we still come up with 122 million hits. And, hope is mentioned 207 times in the Bible (NRSV version). That's a lot of hope!

Mark talked about us living in the 'information age'. Everything is changing and everything has to be done instantly. He said that we are all in a hurry, and that there is no time to think, mediate, or read the Bible. Mark suggested that what we really need in this world is a sense of stability. We need something solid and firm to hold on to.

He says we find this anchor for our soul in Hebrews. The anchor is hope, which is given in Christ Jesus our Lord. Our hope is in Jesus. We will be faced with many questions in our life, but we have our anchor, firm and secure. Finally, he reminded us that hope is a verb, leaving us with the question: "What are you prepared to do?"

Mark also participated in the installation of offices.

MORNING WATCH

Council members were encouraged to begin their day with these meditations provided by Laurie Deacon.

Seize the Hope

by Laurie Deacon

We have this hope, a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul...

Hebrews 6:19

Anchors are fascinating! In order for them to work properly, they must be at some distance from the boat—in the depths—unseen, but holding firm. We see only the little line that is attached to the much larger, more powerful weight. Is not hope and indeed faith like that? While our lives may be bounced around on rough waters, or calmly rocking on quiet waters, there is a presence that holds us.

Sometimes we fear that the line is not strong enough, the strain unbearable. But who is holding onto who? Is it the boat that holds the line or the line that holds the boat? Maybe it is a bit of both. It's good to remember the line. The line is not dependent on our strength, our effort, our attention. Our life line is Jesus Christ. He forged his strength through the weakness of the cross—new material indeed. Our hope is in his ability to hold us even through the rising waters and choppy seas.

Whatever "water" you may find your soul in, "We have this hope—a sure and steadfast anchor."

Prayer:

Anchoring God,
Wrap your life line around my soul,
Hold me through the raging and the calm,
Until you rise up to accompany me on another leg of the journey.
Amen.

Hope enters the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus, a forerunner on our behalf, has entered, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

Hebrews 6:19–20

As I enter the room, I notice the quiet. She sleeps peacefully. Her body has known laughter and love and has held crying children late at night and taught other children in daylight. Her mind doesn't remember these things though and for years she has kept silence—sometimes smiling or moving to a rhythm known only to her. As I think of Jesus passing into the holy of holies where others cannot see, I know that I am now catching a glimpse behind the veil of sacred space. This life that others feed, clean, and clothe holds a precious child, who has spent countless hours in quiet communion within the veil of dementia.

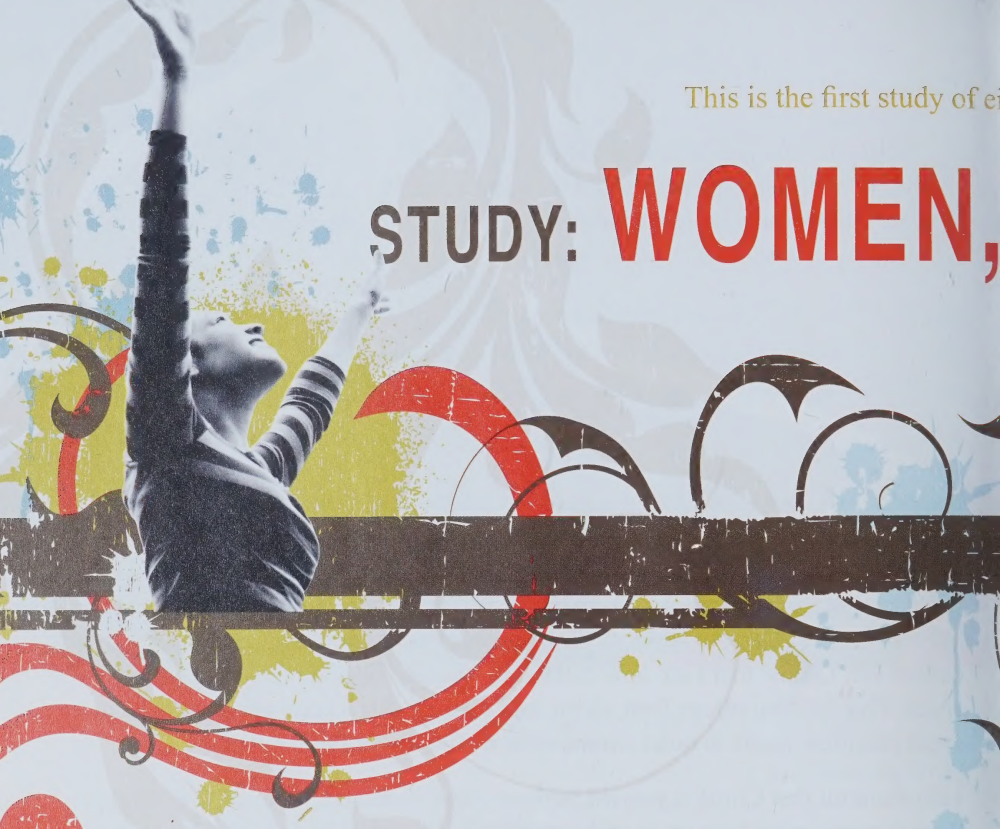
I am thankful that Christ is present in these quiet, removed places of life and that there is no place that we can go where God's love cannot find us. I sit beside her and speak of Jesus, who knows the way to the other side. I sing her favorite songs—Jesus loves me and Amazing grace—and watch her chest rise and fall. It is at moments like this, that I am aware of how thin the veil is between life and death, and how sacred is all life. I leave this holy space, experiencing God behind the veil.

There are many veils in unexpected places in life—times of doubt, confusion, fear, grief. Maybe we don't enter them often. But even there, Christ waits with his silent, life-giving presence, revealed when we most need hope and faith.

Prayer:

On this day Lord
Give me a sense of your holiness
So that my hope and faith might be strengthened.
Especially in situations and places where others have been closed off
Or their life discounted.
Amen.

STUDY: WOMEN,



This is the first study of eight that are planned over the next two years. We will look at women around the world, and also, the issues that affect women. We will look at the special ways in which The Women's Missionary Society and The Presbyterian Church in Canada are working to support and encourage women around the world and we will look at ways that perhaps each one of us can do more to support women in need.

This is a brief introductory session to start you thinking about the issues that affect women today. Following the study, there will be a time for prayer on the topics that will be covered over the next two years.

Opening

One: God spoke: "Let us make human beings in our image,
make them reflecting our nature

**All: So they can be responsible for the fish in the sea,
the birds in the air, the cattle,**

are planned over the next two year.

n Introduction

by Colleen Wood

One: And, yes, Earth itself,
and every animal that moves on the face of Earth."

All: God created human beings;
he created them godlike,

One: Reflecting God's nature.
He created them male and female.

All: God blessed them:
"Prosper! Reproduce! Fill Earth! Take charge!

One: Be responsible for fish in the sea and birds in the air,
for every living thing that moves on the face of Earth."

(From Genesis 1:26–28 The Message)

We have been formed male and female, equal, but different. Over the next several studies, we will pray for women within Canada and around the world. We will look at what it is like to be a woman in Canada, learn about the life of women within a few of our partner churches and organizations, and consider some of the issues that affect us all.

We cannot succeed when half of us are held back.
~Malala Yousafzai

Women in Canada

According to StatsCan, in 2010, 50.4% of the total population in Canada was female, amounting to 17.2 million females. As with the general population of Canada, the female population is aging.

It is interesting, that as you begin to look at women today, a lot has changed over the past several years. For instance, over 20 years ago, men aged 25–54 had more post-secondary education than women, but today that is no longer true. Women, even from a young age, get better marks in school and are more likely to finish high school. In addition, more women graduate from college and university with a diploma or degree. The challenge in this current situation is that women with the same education, still have lower employment earnings than men.[i]

Within Canada, about 4% of the total Canadian female population is Aboriginal. This population is younger than the non-Aboriginal population, with the median age for females being 27.7 (it is 40.5 for the non-Aboriginal population). Aboriginal women do face more issues. They are more likely to be lone parents and experience teen pregnancy, and they have lower education and employment rates and often suffer from inadequate housing. They also have a lower life expectancy at 76.8 years (compared to 82 for the non-Aboriginal population).[ii]

The female immigration population made up just over 20% of the country's female population. As you may have guessed, the source of immigrants has changed over the years. Europe was still the most common source of immigrants in 1971, but today that has changed to Asia and the Middle East (59%).

Obviously, this means that many of our immigrants are now visible minorities. Immigrants tend to settle in our large population centres.

Among our immigrant population, they were more likely to be legally married and many lived with their immediate family. The female immigrant population is also more likely to have completed a university degree or certificate than women born in Canada, partly because Canada's immigration policy emphasizes education.[iii]

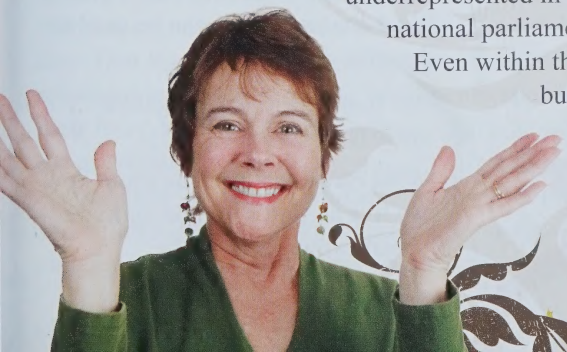
Women of the World

Thinking about women around the world, there are a few things to note. First, there are 57 million more men than women in the world. In the world's most populated countries of China and India this is very pronounced, but in most other countries there are more women than men.[iv]

Women, around the world are generally the ones responsible for caring for family members, meaning many women have a larger workload than men. Women, around the world, live longer than men, but this is equalized in countries where pregnancy and childbirth can be life-threatening.[v]

The United Nations states that there have been advances in education. Women still account for ⅔ of the world's illiterate population, but overall literacy rates for the young are increasing.[vi]

The three most challenging areas for women are power, violence, and poverty. Women are underrepresented in national parliaments. Even within the business world,



Questions

What do you think is the best part about being a woman in Canada in 2015?

What do you think is the worst part about being a woman in Canada in 2015?

women are underrepresented on boards of directors of large companies. Violence against women is universal and takes all forms—physical, sexual, psychological, and economic. Around the world, women are subjected to lack a movement, genital mutilation, rape, child marriage, and so many other atrocities. It is estimated that over 125 million girls and women alive today have experienced female genital mutilation.[vii]

Finally, women are more likely to live in poverty.[viii] It has been said, that women account for 70 per cent of those living in absolute poverty (less than $1.00 a day).[ix]

If you have visited other parts of the world, how would you describe women in that part of the world?

Bible Study

Read Luke 2:36–38

In three short verses, it is amazing how much we learn about Anna. First, she was a prophetess, meaning that she would receive messages from God to pass along. We also learn of her tribe and her family, and that after seven years of marriage, she became a widow. We also learn that she is an elderly Jewish woman.

She is a holy woman who is constantly at the temple having devoted her life to God. When she sees Jesus, she immediately recognizes him as the one who will bring redemption to Israel.

Questions:

What can learn we from Anna about God?

What characteristics can be used to describe Anna?

Are these positive or negative attributes?

What can Anna teach us about how we live as God's People, or more specifically as women?

Activity

Preparation: Bring several newspapers from the past month to distribute to your members. Also, post two pieces of Bristol board or chart paper. On one board write In Canada… and the other In the World…

Look through the newspapers to see what issues are facing women in Canada and around the world. Tear out the articles and/or headlines or list these issues on the chart paper.

Question:
Did any of these topics surprise you? What are some of the positive issues? What are some of the negative issues?

Closing Prayer

Our closing prayer is extensive as we pray for the areas that we will be looking at over the upcoming year.

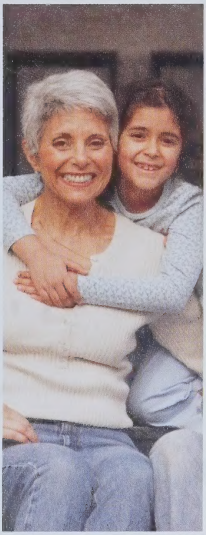
Loving God, We thank you for this world. We thank you for Canada. We thank you for making each of us in your image. Be with us as we consider what it means to live as a woman in today's world.

We pray for women in Canada. Today, many of us live in freedom with boundless opportunities. We thank you for the opportunities we have. Yet, even within Canada, there are those living below their potential because they were born female. Be with these women and help them to find ways to move forward.

We pray for our church. We pray for all leaders within the church, male and female. We pray that these leaders will work to create a safe place for all and look for ways that the church can reach out to the marginalized within our communities and around the world.

We pray for those women who are involved in the sex trade. Many as children were abused, exploited, and devalued. Many faced racism. We pray now that these women will find a new way forward. We pray for those, such as the Rev. Deb Rapport, who are working with women in the sex trade and through relationships and goal setting, and are helping women to reclaim themselves and their lives. We pray that our country will continue to move forward in punishing the users, not the victims.

We pray for women who are victims of domestic violence. Many women and children live in constant fear in their homes. We pray that these women and children will be safe. We pray for their physical and emotional well-being. We



When women suffer in silence, they suffer alone, and their suffering grows. Only when women come together and break the silence can their suffering end.

~ Raheel Raza

pray for a safe escape for these women. Loving God, be with those who work with these women and help them to heal in safety.

We pray for Aboriginal women in Canada. Many still hold the scars as survivors or generational survivors of the Indian Residential Schools. Many are still recipients of racism and abuse. We pray that they will be in loving relationships and will have countless opportunities for health and education. Help our country to move forward in reconciliation with our Aboriginal brothers and sisters, so that we can move forward to create a new future for this country.

We pray for the Maya-Mam women of Guatemala, one of our Together We Can! projects. We pray for the women in this area who are serving as agricultural promoters. Give them the strength and courage to encourage others. We pray that through their education, food scarcity will be reduced and even eliminated. We also pray that the oppression they face will be eliminated and that cycles of poverty will be broken.

Finally, we pray for all those born female in this world. We know that girls continue to be treated as inferior so often within our world. We know that many are abused, and that they do not have equal access to education, food, and safety. We pray that all children will have access to these basic needs.

As we move forward as women in the church, help us to always pray for those who are marginalized in this world. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

---

[i] http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-503-x/2010001/article/11542-eng.htm

[ii] http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-503-x/2010001/article/11442-eng.htm

[iii] http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-503-x/2010001/article/11528-eng.htm

[iv] http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/Worldswomen/Executive%20summary.htm

[v] ibid.

[vi] ibid.

[vii] http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs241/en/

[viii] http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/Worldswomen/Executive%20summary.htm

[ix] https://www.dosomething.org/facts/11-facts-about-women-around-world

Photo: S Kendall

Reconciliation Should Happen

by Colleen Wood

You don't have to believe that reconciliation will happen; you need to believe that it should happen. ~ Justice Murray Sinclair

I had the privilege to attend the closing Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) event in Ottawa on May 31-June 3. Having attended the past event in Montreal in 2013, I was anxious to hear what final recommendations would come out of the commission.

I also was excited to participate in the 5-km walk for reconciliation, which indeed was a highlight. It truly was exciting as approximately 10 000 residential school survivors, their friends and families, and supporters walked. Led by the drums, the diversity of ethnicity and ages was beautiful even under the cool gray skies of the day.

Over the course of Monday and Tuesday, there were many remarkable speakers, including the three commissioners: The Honourable Justice Murray Sinclair (chair), Dr. Marie Wilson, and Chief Wilton Littlechild. Murray Sinclair asked us at this time to do more than just listen, but to act. It will be hard, but we must move towards a new just and equal society. Marie Wilson let us know that the Greek word for witness is martyr. That means that once we have heard this truth, we must bear it regardless of rejection or exhaustion.

Both the Right Honourable Joe Clark, and Barbara Hall, former Toronto Mayor, spoke about

how surprising, as well-educated Canadians, they did not learn anything about residential schools. Joe Clark also explained the difference between an apology and a priority. Chief Rob Joseph encouraged us to have a part in reconciliation, to "examine what our role will be going forward." He thanked God for our presence. Bob Watts said that we have another chance to imagine how we live together. We were also reminded by many of the speakers that this is not an Aboriginal problem, but a Canadian problem.

The one word that we heard several times to describe the residential schools was that it was 'cultural genocide'. The TRC's report defines cultural genocide as the "destruction of those structures and practices that allow the group to continue as a group." By destroying institutions, seizing land, banning languages and cultural practices, restricting movements, and disrupting families, the government tried to destroy the Aboriginal cultures.

On Tuesday, the TRC released their initial report listing 94 recommendations for moving forward, namely: reduce the number of Aboriginal children in care; ensure equal funding for the education of Aboriginal children; develop cultural educational curricula; acknowledge Aboriginal language rights; develop goals to close the gaps in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities; hold a public inquiry into the missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls; develop an annual 'state of Aboriginal Peoples' report; develop age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples; and develop a National Residential School Student Death Registry.

As we move forward, I encourage everyone to learn and listen. Chief Wilton Littlechild encouraged us to link arms with our Aboriginal Peoples and to work together to secure a better future. May we all work together to create a better future for this country.

For over 120 years, more than 150 000 First Nations children were taken from their homes to attend residential school. The churches ran these schools on contract for the government.

The children who attended the schools were stripped of their language, culture, identity, and tradition. Many also experienced physical, mental, and sexual abuse.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was formed as part of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement.

Roma Study: An Update

Editor's Note: Following the publication of the Roma Study in the May June edition of *Glad Tidings*, David and Anna Pándy-Szekeres contacted me to let me know that what I researched and shared in the Roma study was not what they experienced in Hungary, although this is what is shared in many news articles, and among non-profits organizations. I appreciated their willingness to share what their experience is as those who work and interact with the Roma in Eastern Europe on a daily basis. I share David's final prayer that the Roma may find the peace which only Jesus can give, wherever they may reside, and that the discrimination that they face around the world will be minimized through a contribution of their actions and the actions of those they live with.

A letter from David Pándy-Szekeres:

Despite touching upon many aspects of the subject matter in a clear and meaningful way, the article entitled *The Roma* which appeared in the *Glad Tidings* May/June issue begs to be redressed somewhat from the unfortunate and, in places, somewhat misleading warp which it has, perhaps unwittingly, portrayed.

Although it is entirely true that the Roma population in Europe is a very large minority group throughout the continent, it would be unfair to single out and lay total blame for certain discriminatory attitudes or behaviour which Roma communities or individuals may experience on the presently installed governments of certain East-Central European countries, such as Hungary. Today's governments are faced with an issue which has over the last century evolved into something which can no longer be either ignored or neglected. Consequently, the European Union (EU) has officially recognized that steps must be taken to address the situation of this population of which a significant proportion is disadvantaged in multiple ways.

When at its turn Hungary retained for six months the presidency of the EU two years ago, it was this country which worked out the strategy and groundwork policies adopted by the EU and which had as its specific goal the integration of the Roma ethnic group into mainstream society. Hungary is the only EU country which has a representative in the European parliament who is not only of Roma origin, but also female. The governments of both Hungary and other EU countries are implementing these new policies to the best of their abilities and sometimes to the degree of their political will, but the challenges inherent on many levels are daunting.

The methods and shortfalls in this undertaking are readily criticized by those groups whose sole purpose is to discredit sitting governments (in which they are no longer decisive players) and to this end, the "Roma as victim" is always a good card to play in the political game. It cannot be denied that discrimination exists and that the Roma are often targets of. It is possible for this to change—this is the goal, but when one works with such Roma communities, one also sees how the members of the Roma themselves are not always willing to expend as much effort as could be expected of them to assert their rightful place in their local or larger community.

The Roma not having identity cards, for instance, is not necessarily a predicament which others have forced upon them; their not sending their children to pre-school or to school programs, which are free and specifically tailored to the needs of such children, is rarely viewed by the majority population as a responsible attitude. At present, certain elements or values of the culture of the more impoverished members of the Roma population greatly differ from those of the average member of the majority population. The goal to be attained is to diminish these differences and other associated prejudices, while retaining each group's God-given identity and accepting one another as brother and sister created in God's image.

The fact that the Canadian immigration policy was changed to some extent as a consequence of the exceptionally large number of Roma seeking refugee status in Canada is another indication of the challenges faced in formulating an appropriate response to the matter at hand. It is perhaps not unrealistic of Canadian authorities to have named Hungary a "safe" country. Economically, life is surely much more difficult for those who live and try to make a living in Hungary (or in other East-Central European countries). In the case of the Roma, whose level of education often does not exceed the primary level, making ends meet is all that much more difficult, yet it would be very misleading to believe that Hungary is less "safe" a country for Roma to live in than other EU countries. But regardless in which country the Roma may live, may they find the peace which only the Lord Jesus Christ can give.

Mission In Action

Taiwan
Rev. Dr. Paul McLean
150th Mission Anniversary of The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan

This was an exciting time in Taiwan as The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT) celebrated their 150th Mission Anniversary. A symphony orchestra and 400 voice choir help lead worship as 15,000 Presbyterians gathered together on Easter Sunday April 5, 2015 to praise our risen Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We filled the Lin-kou sports stadium with the sounds of a symphonic orchestra, a combined church choir of 400 singers, and our own voices raised in adoration to the living God. In Taiwanese, Mandarin, Hakka, indigenous languages, and English, we declared in song: "I'm not ashamed to own my Lord, or to defend His cause, maintain the honour of His Word, the glory of His cross."

Hearts united as we sang Psalm 95:1–5 to a favourite Taiwanese tune well known throughout the PCT. General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, the Rev. Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit, preached on Matthew 28:1–10 and encouraged the PCT in its mission with Jesus' words, "Do not be afraid." We stood and professed our faith using the PCT's deeply meaningful Confession of Faith. We shared in the Lord's Supper and prayed that our crucified and risen Lord Jesus would fill us with his Spirit and enable us through love and suffering to be his faithful servants and the sign of hope in Taiwan.

On a large screen above the choir we were reminded through historic photographs and recent interviews of God's steadfast leading and blessing over the past 150 years of mission in Taiwan. In 1865, the Presbyterian Church of England (PCE) sent medical missionary Dr. James Maxwell to the south of Taiwan where he served from 1865–1871, and 1883–1885. He was soon followed by other PCE missionaries such as the Rev. Hugh Ritchie (1867–1879), the Rev. William Campbell (1871–1917), and the Rev. Thomas Barclay (1874–1935) famous for his translation of the Bible into Romanized Taiwanese.

The Canada Presbyterian Church sent pioneer missionary the Rev. George Leslie Mackay to the north of Taiwan where from 1872 to 1901 he planted 60 churches, started schools for boys and girls, and laid the foundations for today's Aletheia University, Mackay Memorial Hospital, and Taiwan Theological Seminary. He was followed by his son George William Mackay, the Rev. William Gauld (1892–1923) and others. In 1912, the English and Canadian Presbyterian missions in

south and north Taiwan, along with first and second generation Taiwanese Christians, combined to form the Presbyterian Synod of Formosa. They were tested through the years of Japanese rule and militarism then the arrival of the Chinese Nationalist regime and the 2-28 massacre in 1947, until the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan was officially formed in 1951.

Since then, through different crises and a rapidly changing society, God has continued to bless and use the PCT in manifold ways through its holistic mission of compassionate love and social action among all people in every region of Taiwan. Today the PCT consists of over 1250 churches with 240,000 members; 40% come from Taiwan's indigenous tribes. Finally, we were reminded of the PCT's ongoing mission directives: to proclaim the gospel, nurture God's children, serve with love, transform society, care for God's creation, and promote gospel and culture among all of Taiwan's people.

The joyful 3-hour worship service ended after we sang these words to an indigenous Bunun tune:

Walking as those who've gone before, spreading God's message to these shores,

Modern disciples in our day, call thousands to Jesus the living Way.

Come Holy Spirit to Taiwan, renew our social mission long.

Justice, peace and human rights, harmony for each ethnic group in your sight.

Times change and crises come and go, renew our spirits here below,

Salt of the earth that flavours all, light of the world in every place fall.

Lord, here you find us, send us now, salvation and truth to spread around,

On earth as heaven God's will be done, may Christ's gospel save Taiwan.

After the service, we enjoyed simple lunch boxes, mingled with old friends and greeted new ones. Along with Taiwanese friends, these included: 35 former and current PCT missionaries from England, Scotland, Wales, Canada, the USA, New Zealand, Japan, and Germany; plus moderators, official representatives, and visitors from over 60 partner churches and organizations.

Our own Presbyterian Church in Canada was present through the Moderator of the 140th General Assembly, the Rev. Dr. Stephen Farris, and his wife Patty, Associate Secretary for International Ministries, the Rev. Dr. Glynis Williams, plus

past and present missionaries: Mary Helen Garvin, Diane (Petrie) Osborn, Joy Randall, Wilma Welsh, Louise Gamble, the Rev. Dr. Michael Tai, my wife Mary Beth McLean, and myself. We also met fellow Canadians from the United Church of Canada.

Mary Beth and I were delighted to accept the PCT's generous invitation to attend this wonderful service of worship and praise, and meet with friends old and new. (We also attended the PCT's 60th General Assembly from April 7–10.) We pray that our Risen Saviour will continue to inspire and enliven us all to be His faithful servants and witnesses.

The General Secretary of the PCT, the Rev. Lyim Hong-tiong, wrote in the *PCT 150th Mission Anniversary English Handbook*: "The PCT gives thanks to God for the continuing prayers and support of the PCT's ecumenical partners. Please pray that the PCT will discern and remain faithful to God's many challenges and live out its life and witness in humility, walking humbly with God. The Confession of Faith of the PCT states that the PCT's role in the world is 'to make our Church the sign of hope through love and suffering'. The PCT and all its members are called by God to work diligently and strive to become the genuine sign of hope in Taiwan by being faithful servants of our Lord Jesus Christ."

May God bless and use all His faithful servants in the PCT to share the love and gospel of Jesus Christ for the extension of God's Kingdom throughout Taiwan and beyond

Proverbs is Published in Eight Languages

Eight versions of the book of Proverbs were dedicated on April 9, 2015, during a multilingual worship service at The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan's General Assembly meeting at Mackay Memorial Hospital in Taipei. Each version represents the culmination of months of teamwork by devoted pastors and elders working in these languages: Taiwanese, Cou, Sediq, Hakka, Amis, Bunun, Drekay, and Paiwan.

During the thanksgiving service, the 300 members of General Assembly joined in a responsive reading from Proverbs 8:22–36. Clothed in traditional attire a representative from each language group read a verse in their mother-tongue to which the assembly replied reading the next verse in Taiwanese or Mandarin. Chair of the Board of the Bible Society in Taiwan (BST), the Rev. Kho Sing-doh, explained the background behind this special publication of Proverbs and thanked the PCT for its ongoing support for all the projects under the BST. General Secretary of the PCT, the Rev. Lyim Hong-tiong, thanked the BST for answering the needs of the PCT's 1250 churches and accepted a copy of Proverbs in each language. He also acknowledged representatives from each ethnic group, as well

as the General Secretary of the BST, Presbyterian minister, the Rev. Daniel Cheng Cheng-jen. The joyful celebration was conducted by a Paiwan friend, PCT Associate General Secretary for Indigenous Mission, the Rev. Eleng Tjaljimaraw. She also chairs the PCT's Committees for Indigenous Bible Translation and for Promoting Indigenous Languages.

The BST provides training in translation technique, computer-assisted text processing and file management, plus quality control for these eight projects through two of its Translation Advisers, the Rev. Dr. Liang Wang-huei who works with the Taiwanese, Cou, and Sediq projects and myself. I worked on the Hakka Bible (published in 2012) and now serve on the Amis, Bunun, Drekay, and Paiwan projects.

Most churches which use these eight versions are Presbyterian, consequently the PCT is the BST's major financial supporter and provides most of the translation team members. In addition to two or three thousand copies of each version requested by PCT churches, the BST published copies for other denominations and for public schools. Many PCT pastors teach their mother-tongue in local schools where they can now add Proverbs as an excellent resource for language learning. We pray that students will also grow in wisdom and the knowledge of God (Proverbs 9:10).

The Taiwanese and Hakka versions of Proverbs each use Han character and Roman-phonetic scripts in two parallel columns. Most people read the text in the Han column. The phonetic column, which reproduces the sounds of the Han characters, can help younger readers pronounce the common language of their parents and grandparents more accurately. Someone like myself, from a different language group, can learn to speak Hakka or Taiwanese using the phonetic script, then gradually learn how to read the Han characters with their richer meanings. On the other hand, Taiwan's indigenous languages belong to the Austronesian family of languages—they are totally different from Han-Chinese languages.

The six indigenous versions of Proverbs each use their own respective Roman scripts (adopted by Taiwan's National Ministry of Education) in parallel with Mandarin-Chinese Han characters from either *Today's Chinese Version* (1979, 1995) or the more classical *Chinese Union Version* (1919, 1989). Indigenous people read their own language according to the translation in the column with the Roman script. If they come across a word they don't understand, they can refer to the Mandarin-Chinese column to see what it means. Each of the eight versions is accompanied by a set of audio CDs with the entire book of Proverbs read by members of the translation

teams. The CDs are an aid for both comprehension and language learning. The BST thanks Wycliffe Bible Translators for their help in producing the audio sets.

The translation teams and the BST prepared Proverbs as a way to join the PCT in thanking God for His steadfast love and faithfulness as the PCT celebrates 150 years of mission among Taiwan's diverse ethnic groups. One way to view this history of mission is to consider the way the Bible was translated into Taiwanese, Hakka and indigenous languages:

1. When missionaries from England and Canada arrived on the island 150 years ago to share the gospel, they learned the majority language, commonly called "Taiwanese." The Rev. Dr. Thomas Barclay was a key contributor to the first complete translation of the Bible into Taiwanese (published in 1933). Today, readers find it somewhat antiquated and not always easy to understand. The 2015 edition of Taiwanese-Proverbs is reprinted from the BST's 2013 modern translation called *Today's Taiwanese Version*.
2. Mission among Hakka people in the Church's early years went slower than among the majority Taiwanese, in part, because very few missionaries tried to learn Hakka. The Rev. Hugh Ritchie

WE RESPOND
Inspired by God's Promise of Abundant Life...
PWS&D envisions a sustainable, compassionate and just world.
Be a part of this vision. Donate Today.
Presbyterian World Service &Development
WeRespond.ca
1-800-619-7301 ext. 291
50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, ON M3C 1J7

arrived in southern Taiwan in 1867. After Taiwanese, he learned some Hakka and started a Hakka congregation; unfortunately, he died of cholera in 1879. Most missionaries (even the Rev. Dr. George Leslie Mackay) and early Christians thought Hakka people would eventually assimilate, so there was little effort to translate the Bible into Hakka. I was part of the team that worked on the first translation of Proverbs into Hakka in 1993–1995. The 2015 edition is a reprint of the Revised version of Proverbs which came out in 2012 when the BST published the complete Hakka Bible.

3. Mission and church growth among Taiwan's indigenous peoples expanded rapidly between the late 1920s and the 1950s. Today there are over 500 indigenous congregations in the PCT! Indigenous Bible translation work began in the 1950s and continues to this day. The 2015 edition of Amis-Proverbs is a Revision of Proverbs that was first published in the 1997 complete Amis Bible. The other five indigenous translations of Proverbs are all brand new. The indigenous teams are now pressing on with other books and hope to complete their whole Bibles over the next few years.

The PCT, the BST, and we in the PCC are deeply committed to preserving and promoting all of Taiwan's non-Mandarin languages so that people can read, hear, and share God's life-giving Word in their own mother-tongues. Bible translation is a basic component of the Church's mission which is also concerned with the interrelationship between gospel and culture.

One final note: the week before Proverbs was published, I took PCC Associate Secretary for International Ministries, the Rev. Dr. Glynis Williams, and my wife Mary Beth to visit my friends and co-workers at the BST office in Taipei. We enjoyed good conversations with the Rev. Daniel Cheng (General Secretary), Ms. Jessie Hsu (Publishing Director and Deputy General Secretary), and the Rev. Dr. Peng Kuo-wei (General Editor of the BST's *Chinese Union Study Bible* project). On behalf of the PCC, Glynis presented the Rev. Cheng with an example of indigenous Canadian art, an *inukshuk*, in grateful appreciation for the long-standing friendship and partnership we share in translating the Word of God into the mother-tongues of all the ethnic groups in Taiwan. Thank you for your prayers and continued support of this important mission work through *Presbyterians Sharing*.

Boarding Home Ministry

by Rachel Burnet

My name is Rachel Burnet. I am 27-years-old and I currently work for the Public Prosecution Service of Canada as a Crown Witness Coordinator in Yellowknife. Prior to moving here in January, I volunteered with the Boarding House Ministry since September 2011.

I initially began volunteering as part of a research component in one of my graduate classes. I was looking at how those experiencing mental illness are stigmatized in our society. I began attending boarding house visits and getting to know the residents. Additionally, at the end of the semester I interviewed the owner of the boarding house, volunteers, and family members who have loved ones living in a boarding house. Although I assumed that those experiencing mental illness were stigmatized, I could not be prepared for the personal stories that were shared of ill treatment by others, who simply did not understand.

When I finished my research project, I made the decision to continue attending. The residents had already given me so much. Aside from helping me pass my class, their friendships were invaluable. They told me about their lives—the good and the bad. Each of them reminded me about how far God's love can go, even during the darkest of times. No matter how bad things get, no matter how many times we sometimes want to give up, there is always joy to be felt by the grace of God. They also enjoyed listening to me talk about the things in my life, and were equally happy for my joys or supportive at my misfortunes.

I think that as someone who grew up in a privileged life, sometimes we

take things for granted and we just expect that things will be provided, such as a warm bed, clothing, paid bills, supportive friends, a smile when walking down the street from a stranger, or polite staff at restaurants, malls and stores. But these are things that are not afforded to all people and if you begin to get to know people living a different lifestyle, you will quickly learn that which is public and readily available for all, is not really for everyone. just those who we as society deem as worthy enough.

It is purely by the grace of God that we are where we are today (But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. Ephesians 4:7). I think that some people have difficulty attending the boarding house because poverty makes them uncomfortable. Living standards are not the same for everyone and this can also make people feel out of place. People find it easier to send money overseas to a continent that is far away rather than walking out of their home and simply acknowledging someone on the street or even giving a dollar to them (God forbid if they use it to buy alcohol; because none of us would ever do that.). I encourage you all to try it sometime and then be mindful of the looks as you will begin to feel what is called Stigma by Association as this violates the social norms of society. For a fleeting moment you can feel what they feel every day.

Join the Team – Subscribe Today
PCConnect monthly e-newsletter:
presbyterian.ca/pcconnect
All the latest PCC news and information
delivered to your inbox, once a month.

In the Society

Synodical

The **Central Northeastern Ontario** Synodical Annual Meeting was held at St. Andrew's Scarborough on April 17–18, hosted by East Toronto Presbyterial. 78 members were registered.

On Friday evening, friendships were renewed and a delicious meal was served by the ladies of St. Andrew's. A bell choir, The Bells of St. Andrew's Choir, delighted and amazed their audience.

On Saturday morning it was down to business. The Rev. Kristine O'Brien led a Bible study on the theme, Abundant Living. She stimulated much deep thought, and had us considering ways of sharing our wealth of food and Christ's love with our less fortunate neighbours, while avoiding the "we" and "them" syndrome.

Routine business was dealt with efficiently, although there was much discussion on a possible name change for the WMS and on camperships. Tori Smit provided a list of 15 books and reviewed them. She had selected books that would be useful for families with children or for Christian education programs in churches. She also reviewed two books that could provide additional study resources for WMS groups.

The closing worship service included a memorial service for WMS members within the Synodical who had died in the past year. Finally, Tori Smit installed the new executive.

The Synodical of **Quebec & Eastern Ontario** held their 2015 Annual Meeting at St. Matthew's Presbyterian, Ingleside, on March 28.

After registration, coffee, and fellowship, we began by singing, I waited for the Lord my God. Vivian Froats welcomed the group and President Irene Nesbitt opened with prayer to constitute the meeting. The Rev. Marianne Emig Munro, Catherine Blatch, and Janet Jones led devotions on Psalm 40.

Ruth Davidson reviewed the financial report and noted that givings were down by $2000 this past year.

Margaret Reynolds shared her Memories of Council. She spoke about the changes that had occurred while she was on Council: the closing of The Book Room; people billeted in others' homes now stay in hotels; conference calls to cut costs rather than meeting in Toronto. The National WMS now makes the decisions for the study topics, with input from Council executive, and has added them to *Glad Tidings*; they also choose the writers for the Mission Sunday services. Margaret told about the Women's Gathering and the wonderful speakers. Irene Nesbitt thanked Margaret for her service with a small token of appreciation.

Business included:

1. Choosing the delegates to Council: Janet Jones, Mary Lynn McConnachie, Linda Gerry, and Patricia Grainger.
2. For the Fall synodical we are hoping to have the Rev. Dr. Paul McLean as a speaker while he is on furlough.
3. The Guatemala Exposure Tour is on October 1–10, 2015.
4. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission is having a closing event in Ottawa on June 1–3 with a walk on May 31.
5. The International Project for the Together We Can! 2015–2017 is the Maya-Mam people of Guatemala.
6. The Canadian Project for the Together We Can! 2015–2017 is the ARISE Ministry of East Toronto Presbytery.

Montreal Presbyterial led the In Memorial. As each name was read, a rock was placed in a bowl. Several candles were lit and scriptures were shared between each memorial. The service closed with the hymn, *Amazing grace*.

After a lovely meal and kind service, the afternoon session began with a rousing hymn sing.

Our afternoon speaker, the Rev. Marilyn Savage, a retired minister who lives near Smiths Falls, spoke on the topic, Sensing the Shift. Marilyn feels that mission flows out of worship. She asked, "What does God want us to restore and renew? What is God's mission?" We broke into groups to discuss how to be the mission of Jesus in the church and the community. Some people shared what their church was doing for mission.

Marilyn then read Luke 7 where Jesus is invited to have supper at Simon's place and Mary comes and washes His feet. We should also spend time at Jesus' feet. She felt that we would have to shift a whole lot faster than we are actually in order to be prepared for pain, and to re-examine our WMS purpose and focus on the four aspects of this statement: prayer, study, service, and fellowship.

Our first priority is to Jesus and our second is to others.

The Rev. Marilyn Savage then led the installation service for the new officers of the synodical. The meeting closed with the singing of the hymn, Give me oil in my lamp, and a prayer.

- Vivian Young

Presbyterial

Westminster Presbyterial held their Annual General Meeting on February 25 at Kerrisdale Church. The Rev. Steve Filyk led the devotions.

Jee Wan Hee, who had been on a medical mission trip in the jungles of Borneo, showed slides and narrated her adventure. There were two doctors, a dentist, as well as evangelists on the journey. As she spoke the language, she was helpful as registrar and translator. The villages were only accessible by boat. Previous missionaries from Australia had brought the Christian message to them, and many small churches were started.

Barbara Marshall gave a meaningful In Memoriam, with a eulogy about Nancy Bell, a former Synodical President, who recently died.

Our afternoon speaker was the Rev. Graeme Illman from Ratanak International. He told us of the genocide that decimated Cambodia 40-years ago and how healing and hope have still a long way to go.

Ratanak had its beginning 25-years ago when Brian McConaghy, a member of the RCMP here, had his heart touched by the sadness he saw, especially the hardship of orphans and exploited children. He returned to Canada determined to make a difference. With the help of friends, a suitcase of medical supplies ended up as a full container that was distributed to clinics there. Named after a child he saw in a documentary, Ratanak has now become an International charity, supported by Britain and Australia as well as Canada.

It has built dormitories, schools, wells, and dams to hold back flood waters; taught job skills; provided a safe place for grannies who beg on the streets during the day; arranged for emergency food: developed sanitation programs, and bought ambulances. Their new initiatives focus on anti-exploitation programs—to support survivors of international trafficking and help them become re-established when they return home.

Maitland Presbyterial held their Spring Rally on May 11 at Melville Presbyterian Church in Brussels with the theme, An Open Door.

Co-President Betty Johnston constituted the meeting after a delicious assortment of desserts was shared by the Brussels WMS. Margaret McInroy and Mary Douma presented inspirational music.

Paula Aceto, Senior Development Officer of Evangel Hall Mission (ehm), was our speaker. The ehm has

provided an open door of care and compassion to help heal and restore the lives of hundreds of thousands of people over the years. Presently, the mission serves 100,000 meals a year, donates 15,000 pieces of clothing annually and mentors 100 at-risk youth every week. It also offers housing for 110 homeless people, provides free health and dental care for 1,200 individuals, and has 26,000 hours of volunteer service every year. Aceto is responsible for fund-raising and planning events. There are 84 housing units in the new building which opened in 2006, with youth programs, women's groups, narcotics anonymous, and free mental health and dental clinics. Out of the Cold offers the homeless a place for 30 people to sleep indoors every Tuesday night during the cold season.

A collection of urgently needed items was given to the ehm by the women of the Maitland Presbyterial.

Mary Simmons reported from Council that the Together We Can! initiatives for 2015–17 will assist the Maya-Mam women of Guatemala through Presbyterian World Service & Development and will support the ARISE Ministry of East Toronto. In that initiative, the Rev. Deb Rapport, Director of Arise Ministry, helps women and children involved in sex trafficking.

The Open Door theme continued through a worship service led by WMS members from Ripley. Karen

Paula Aceto, Evangel Hall Mission

Webster expressed thanks to all involved in the evening and Judy Watts closed in prayer.

Lindsay Presbyterial met at St. John's, Cresswell, for the Annual Meeting on January 18 with the theme, Be Bold and Courageous. Following registration, WMS members appreciated the hot tea, coffee, and muffins served by the Cresswell ladies, on a cold winter's morning.

After a short hymn sing, the ladies were warmly welcomed by Gloria Johns, commenting on the importance of the work of the women in the church. Then, President Eileen Smith constituted the meeting with prayer and the WMS Purpose.

Remembering

Mildred Bowes
WMS, Almonte ON and
WMS, Bristol PQ

Annie Mae Whitten
Erskine Presbyterian,
Dundalk ON

Margaret Cleland
Britton WMS,
Knox Presbyterian,
Listowel ON

Nancy Bell,
Knox Presbyterian,
New Westminster BC

Marjorie Wood
St. Andrew's,
Owen Sound ON

Phyllis Hope Smith
Laurel Lea
St. Matthew's WMS,
Sarnia ON

Margaret Roulston
St. James Presbyterian,
Stouffville ON

Eva Powrie (Sutherland),
Armour Heights WMS,
Toronto ON

Grace Raney
WMS, Glenview Church,
Toronto ON

Helen McKague
Goforth WMS, St. Andrew's,
Wingham ON

Margaret Shaydak
St. James Presbyterian
Church WMS Auxiliary,
Winnipeg MB

Jean Agar
Campbell-Afternoon
Auxiliary, Knox,
Woodstock ON

Glenarm members presented the devotions based on Joshua 1:9. Joan Snider read the minutes of the 2014 Annual Meeting as well as those from the executive and they were accepted. The treasurer's report was encouraging as the financial objective was met.

The afternoon session began with a short hymn and then Eileen Smith gave a further meditation on Joshua 1:9. Wick WMS led the In Memoriam service which was based on Revelation 21.

- Joy Noble

Montreal Presbyterial meet last Fall to celebrate their 150th anniversary.

Together with WMS groups, congregations, and mission-minded people We Can make a difference.

TOGETHER We Can!

Two new projects are starting! More information will be mailed to WMS groups in the fall of 2015.

Maya-Mam Women, Guatemala

In the western highlands of Guatemala, PWS&D is working to improve the livelihoods of indigenous Maya Mam women and their families. Programs are strengthening food security and nutrition by helping households improve agricultural practices, crop diversity and livestock production. Indigenous land rights, women's empowerment and cultural identity are important themes that are being addressed through the program.

Arise Ministry

In response to the overwhelming need in Toronto to intentionally support one of the cities most marginalized and victimized populations, Arise ministry provides outreach, intensive case management, and pastoral care for women wanting to exit the sex trade. It advocates for the rights, goals, and dreams of those who have become victims of sex-trafficking.

Please send your donation to:
Women's Missionary Society
50 Wynford Drive, Toronto,
ON M3C 1J7 800-619-7301
wms@presbyterian.ca

PM40013283 R9517

Please report any errors/changes in address

Glad Tidings

September/October 2015

24 Thanksgiving Worship: Thankful: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow
by Rebekah Mitchell

Contents

IN THIS ISSUE

3 **Editorial**

4 **Food**
by Dorothy Henderson

10 **Love in a Can of Peaches?**
by Emily Fern

14 **Food Security in Nicaragua**
by Denise Van Wissen

18 **Where is God?**

22 **Together we Can! Project ARISE Minisry**

32 **Together we Can! Project Maya Mam Women, Guatemala**

34 **Ontario Presbyterian Chorus tours the Maritimes**
by Katherine Allen

36 **Simple Sheep**
by Sharon Dow

41 **Mission In Action**

IN THE SOCIETY

44 **In the Society**

46 **The WMS ... Did You Know?**

47 **Remembering**

Glad Tidings

September/October 2015

Volume 91, No. 5

EDITOR: Colleen Wood

DESIGN: Alexis McKeown

Published six times a year by the Women's Missionary Society of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Member of the Canadian Church Press.

Canada

Glad Tidings reports on aspects of the Women's Missionary Society on all levels. *Glad Tidings* challenges concerned Christians to reflect on their faith through articles and reports related to mission and social justice issues, locally, nationally, and internationally. *Glad Tidings* through its content, encourages readers to become informed, educated, inspired, and motivated to action. *GladTidings* provides a forum for a broad spectrum of opinion and information, thus the views expressed in features, news reports, letters, and book reviews are not necessarily endorsed by the WMS or by the Editor.

2015 subscription rate $15.00 plus applicable taxes: ON, NB, NL $16.95, NS $17.25, BC, AB, SK, MB, QC, $15.75, PE $17.10. WMS members are asked to send subscriptions through their group *Glad Tidings* Secretary. Individual subscribers may order direct from *Glad Tidings*. Please make all cheques and money orders payable at par to *Glad Tidings*.

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to the circulation department at 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, Ontario M3C 1J7. Phone 416-441-1111; 800-619-7301.
E-mail gladtidings@presbyterian.ca. ISSN: 00170720.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund (CPF) for our publishing activities.

Editorial

Food. It's such a funny thing in Canada these days. As I write this, it is late June, and our local market has been open for two weeks. We have been feasting on local strawberries, asparagus, and fresh peas. There was lamb on the barbecue last week, which my young daughter, a picky eater, devoured with a little garlic and rosemary. We have renewed our bottle of local honey, and enjoyed local bacon, cheese, bread, and other yummy baked goods.

I love the market, though I do joke, that I have to go to the bank machine both before and after shopping there. There is the irony that buying strawberries would be cheaper at my local grocery store. But, they likely would have travelled all the way from California before hitting my breakfast table here in the Toronto area. I am thankful for some of this food transport because I absolutely love that I can readily munch on bananas year round even though there is not a banana tree in site. (Though I try to buy fair trade because I have heard stories of the violence, the toxins, and the corruption of purchasing regular bananas.) But, I also do love to buy local when the season allows.

I also love to bake and cook. A great evening for me is baking up some tasty treats, sneaking in some healthy ingredients, like grated carrots, whole grains, or apple sauce. Cooking with my children is a delight. Recently, I had the joy of seeing my five-year-old daughter baking her first mini apple pie for her pie-loving grandfather, while I baked a blueberry pie beside her (my son joined in later and made some turnovers with the leftover pastry).

I am blessed. I can make food choices. I can seek out healthy ingredients. I can choose to buy what I want, when I want it. So many don't have this option. Every month in Canada, close to 850,000 Canadians are assisted by food banks, and many of those affected by hunger are children and youth.[1] Many of our churches operate their own food ministries or participate in community food banks. We follow Christ's call to reach out and feed the hungry. As you celebrate this Fall's bounty of fresh food, share that bounty with others. Pray for those in need as you continue to share generously with those in your community, and those around the world.

[1] **http://www.foodbankscanada.ca/Learn-About-Hunger/About-Hunger-in-Canada.aspx**

FOOD

BY DOROTHY HENDERSON

I love food. I love growing it. I love thinking about it. I love sharing it. I love dreaming up new ways to prepare food, and, of course, I love eating it.

There are so many aspects to food, which is part of the fascination. Food is nutrition. It is social and communal. Food has a psychological effect on our body. There are also ethical and justice issues associated with food and food production, and there is a strong spiritual component to food.

Every year in Exeter, Ontario, the community where I live, I run a Culinary Camp for children. Last year, an 11-year-old girl, the youngest child in the family, came to camp to learn some cooking skills. Her dad announced that she was the only one in the family interested in cooking, and that no one else, not even Mom and Dad, knew how to cook. Astonished, I asked, "But, how do you eat?" He told me that they pick up ready-cooked foods at the supermarket, order in pizza, or eat at fast food outlets.

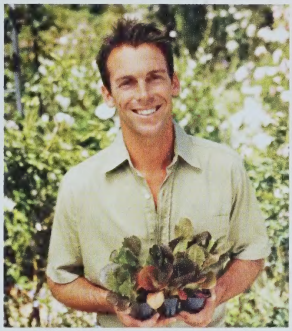
In my mother's generation, almost everyone grew their own food, preserved this food for winter, and cooked three meals a day. Can it be that, in two or three generations, we have lost the ability to grow, preserve, and cook?

The eagerness of the children to cook and learn about food led me to write a cookbook featuring fresh, local foods. The inspiration for this cookbook came from an incident at our local Exeter farmer's market. I overheard a vendor gently urging a woman to try a pint of Saskatoon berries. "But, what would I do with

them when I get them home?" she exclaimed. An idea came to me. Perhaps more people would visit farm markets and enjoy the pleasure of driving through farm gates to buy fresh, local products if they knew what do with the produce once it was back in their kitchen.

Why shop locally?

There are lots of reasons to shop locally for food. First, the produce is so much tastier. As I write this article, I have just finished a bowl of fresh, local strawberries. The flavour and sweetness of those berries outshine the imported, half-green berries I eat off-season.



Harvard's School of Public Health tells us that local foods can be much more nutritious, too. Foods grown far away spend significant time on the road and therefore have more time to lose nutrients. Farmers growing for a local market select growing varieties for their taste, nutrition, and diversity rather than for their ability to stand up in shipping. In direct, local marketing, produce is usually sold within 24 hours after harvest, at its peak freshness and ripeness. In addition, during the shorter time and distance to market, produce is handled by few people, decreasing the potential for damage and contamination. An added advantage of local buying is the ability to directly ask the grower what, if any, sprays or hormones are used in the production of the food.

There is good economic reason to buy food directly from the grower. In her book, *The Ontario Table*, Lynn Ogryzlo (Epulum Books, 2011) cites the work of Doug Vallery, Experience Renewal Solutions Inc. and Dr. Kevin Stolarick of the Martin Prosperity Institute, University of Toronto. According to their calculations, if every household in Ontario (and I'm sure this applied to other provinces, too) spent just $10 of their grocery budget on local foods each week, this would inject $2.4 billion into rural communities yearly. Our food purchasing choices could create a stronger and more sustainable food system.

The social aspects of food

When we think about food, we often underestimate the power of the family dinner and communal meals. There is joy in taking a friend to lunch. And what is the first thing you do when guests come into your home? You take their coats, and you offer them something to eat or drink. Food

and hospitality is at the very heart of our Gospel—welcoming the stranger. The book of Acts, describing life among the early believers, says this: *Day by day, the believers spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people.* (Acts 2: 46–47) Sharing food creates goodwill.

Ethical aspects to food and food production

Today, world-wide, there are over 870 million people who do not have access to adequate food to live healthy lives. Most of these are farm families whose livelihood is threatened by climate change. To these families, climate change looks like this: higher temperatures, more droughts and parched crops, changes in rainfall patterns leaving farmers worried about when to plant crops, and rising sea levels crowding out coastal communities and contaminating water supplies and agricultural lands.

The Canadian Foodgrains Bank Climate Fund is a practical way to respond to the needs of those who are affected by climate change. By donating to the Climate Fund, you acknowledge your personal contribution to the greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change—things like travel, heating, and electrical use. Your donation is based on the amount of carbon you and your family produce each month or year. It is then used to help small-scale farmers adapt to the effects of the changing climate so they can grow enough food to feed themselves. Although we can't avoid heating and electricity costs in Canada and most of us would not want to give up the family car, we are able to share with the desperately poor because we are one of the richest countries in the world.

Psychological aspects of food

Certain nutrients in food affect our mood by modifying the production or release of natural brain chemicals called "neurotransmitters"? Which foods should we eat to improve our mood?

Bread of Life

Jesus, who called himself the "bread of life," reminds us still, that food is not just for the stomach. Food is the very source of life for our body, soul, and mind.

Walnuts are an excellent source of an omega-3 fatty acid that is needed for mood-lifting neurotransmitter production. Any food rich in omega-3 fatty acids (flax, tofu, omega-3 eggs) helps to lift your spirits.

Lentils are an excellent source of folate, a B vitamin that is essential for mood and nerve function in the brain. Studies have linked *low* levels of folate to depression. Folate deficiency impairs the metabolism of serotonin, a neurotransmitter that makes us feel calm, relaxed, and happy.

Chocolate contains a chemical called phenyl-ethyl-amine, which scientists tell us is the very chemical that is produced when you fall in love. Take your pick: eat chocolate or fall in love! Both are good for you.

Food and nutrition

Leslie Beck, one of Canada's leading nutritional experts, has written extensively about the power of food to heal. Our bodies need specific nutrients to grow, restore, and repair cells.

Swiss chard, for instance, is very high in vitamins A and K; a half cup gives you a whopping 10 mg lutein, which is important for vision. (Most lutein supplements, prescribed by

doctors to reduce risk of macular degeneration, are 6 mg.)

Black beans are an excellent source of vegetarian protein, high in fiber, an excellent source of magnesium which is important to maintain blood levels, and a good source of low glycemic carbohydrates which keeps blood sugars at an even level. Black beans contain more antioxidents than other beans because of their colour.

Kefir, a cultured milk product, is high in calcium, potassium, protein, and Vitamin B. Kefir has three times more probiotic culture than yogurt, which improves digestive tract health.

Food and our spiritual life

The famous Mahatma Gandhi once said, "There are people in the world so hungry, that God cannot appear to them except in the form of bread."

We know, from reading our Bibles, that Jesus totally understood the connection between food and loving God. We remember his amazing miracle of the picnic of loaves and fish. We think of his stories of the sower and the seeds. We remember the story of the woman kneading bread. We recall that he loved to eat and drink with friends—Zaccheaus, Mary, Martha, the disciples.

Jesus, who called himself the "bread of life," reminds us still, that food is not just for the stomach. Food is the very source of life for our body, soul, and mind.

Dorothy Henderson lives, gardens, and cooks in Exeter, Ontario. She has recently retired as minister of Caven Presbyterian Church in Exeter. She has recently published a cookbook, Loving it Local, *featuring the growing and preparing of fresh, local foods.*

Apricot upside-down cake

Prep time: 15 minutes

Needed: mixing bowl; buttered 9" (23 cm) round or 8" (20x20 cm) square cake pan; small saucepan Baking time: 40 minutes in 350°F oven

Serves: 6–8

¼ cup (50 mL) butter or margarine 50 mL
¼ cup (50 mL) brown sugar
¼ cup (50 mL) maple syrup
8–10 fresh apricots, split and pitted
1½ cups (375 mL) flour
1 tsp (5 mL) baking powder
¼ tsp (1 mL) baking soda
Pinch of salt
⅓ cup plus 1 tbsp (90mL) margarine or butter
¾ cup (175 mL) white sugar
Zest from 1 lemon (about 1 tbsp) 15 mL or 1 tbsp lemon juice
2 eggs
¾ cup(175 mL) sour cream

1. In a small saucepan, melt butter, brown sugar and maple syrup over medium heat. Pour into cake pan.
2. Arrange apricots, cut side up, on top of syrup in pan.
3. Combine flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt.
4. In a separate bowl, press or beat together the butter, sugar, lemon zest and eggs.
5. Beat in half the flour mixture. Stir in the sour cream. Beat in the remaining flour mixture. Pour over apricots.

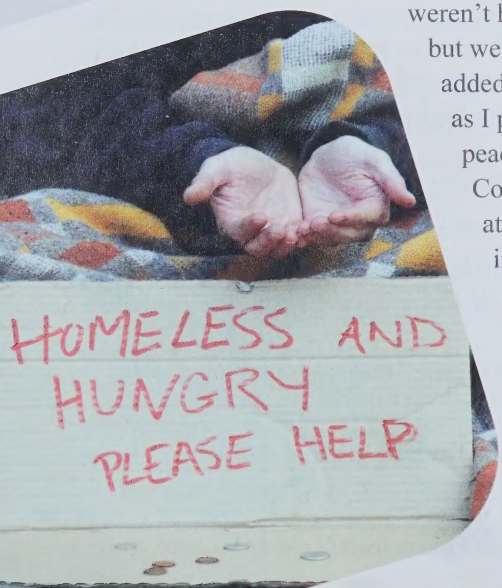
After baking, run a knife around the edges to loosen any crusty bits. Set a flat pan or plate on top of cake and quickly invert and remove the pan. The beautiful, curved side of the apricots will be on top.
Serve with ice or whipped cream or "maple cream," made by combining table cream with 2 tbsp (30 mL) maple syrup.

NOTE: This cake may also be made with any fresh fruit: diced rhubarb, raspberries, blueberries, Saskatoon berries.

Taken from *Loving it Local*, p. 15

People who come to the drop-in are welcomed.

Sometimes I wonder if the Fruit of the Spirit can come in a can? I held the can of peaches in my hand for a moment. These were special peaches. They weren't homemade or even a good brand name, but were labelled 'packed in water, no sugar added' in large blue letters, so I hesitated as I put them on the shelf. This made the peaches special. I was sorting food for the Community Outreach and Support Program at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Whitby, and we were really low on supplies. We hold a drop-in afternoon every other Friday. One of the things we offer as part of the program is a food bank. People who come to the drop-in are offered a coffee and something to eat; they are met by a program volunteer, who welcomes them and makes sure they feel that we



LOVE in a Can of Peaches?

by Emily Fern

are glad they came. This fellowship, love, and respect are the foundation of our program. We offer a lot more than just material support. We work hard to get to know our community guests who use our program so that we can meet their individual and unique needs. This is why I was stuck with a can of peaches in my hand.

We try to offer special diets for people, who have allergies or need low sodium or heart-healthy foods. We have many seniors struggling with diabetes, and I needed these peaches to make up low sugar food packs for them. I also knew that a younger man had come to our program last week for the first time, and he was struggling with horrible dental issues. (Probably from a long history of substance abuse and neglect, his teeth were literally rotting away.) He was in significant pain and could only manage soft foods. I had set aside a couple of pudding cups, but had not yet found anything else suitable for this new friend. These peaches might work out really well. He had seemed shy and somewhat embarrassed when he had come in the first time.

One of our most outgoing and 'grandmotherly' volunteers had quickly come up and introduced herself to him and had offered him a warm drink. With her decades' experience of hospitality and generosity, she had literally swept in with love and kindness and before he knew it the young man was sitting in the church hall holding a cup of coffee and looking around with a slightly bemused expression at the busy chaos around him. As one of the community health workers on duty that day, I had tried to gently coax some information from him to make sure he did not need any help accessing or navigating the social services or government supports available. He had only given me his first name—Ben*. I did not ask him for any more information. When you come to our program, you are welcomed as a friend—not a number or a statistic.

...THEN COME IN.

At our Community Outreach and Support Program, we are here and we are ready to meet you where you are, right here right now.

- If you need a place to let your children play, colour, or read with a nutritious snack while you have a break or get parenting support—then come in.
- If you need help to find a safe place to sleep for the night—then come in.
- If you need diapers or baby formula—then come in.
- If you need someone to talk to, to pray with you, or just to listen—then come in.
- If you need help completing your Child Disability Tax Form or your OSDP application—then come in.
- If you are in crisis—then come in.
- If you are out of lunch box snacks or laundry soap or toilet paper—then come in.
- If you want help to check your blood sugar or to pick up some produce from the community garden—then come in.

If you come in, you will be welcomed as a friend and served with the love of Jesus.

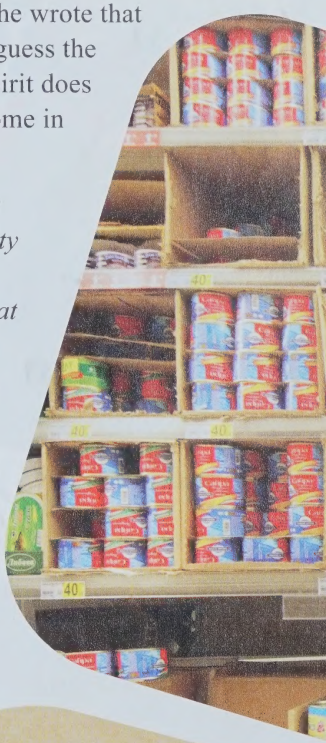
We have found that food is a powerful gift for those in need. People come to use the food bank portion of our program—they come to get food and a grocery gift card. They come *back* because they have found a place where there is compassion and respect for others and they are welcomed. When people come back, we can start to build relationships. We get to know them by name. We get to know their families, their situations, and their stories. This relationship building is our powerful tool. Through relationships, we can help people make long-term sustainable changes and access lasting supports. We have helped people change housing situations, go back to school, start new jobs, or work though treatment programs.

We feel honoured to be able to both celebrate their achievements and support them despite setbacks. We have walked with people through weddings and job losses, deaths and births, graduations, and moves. Through relationships, we have been

able to support lasting changes that although they don't need the food bank anymore, they still come back to the Community Outreach and Support Program—sometimes as volunteers, always as friends.

I really was not sure if Ben was going to return to the drop-in program this week. I didn't have a good answer about dental care for him yet. I had made a few calls, but he needed way more treatment than the social service programs would provide. I really didn't know if we were going to have enough food for the 60–70 individuals and families, who were going to come through the doors looking for help. That meant between the non-perishable items I was sorting through now, and the produce from our community garden programs, we needed to be able to provide food for over 265 seniors, adults, children, and infants by tomorrow. I had been doing this for long enough now that I didn't really worry anymore. Volunteers in the program joke about the miracle of the loaves and fishes all the time, and I had seen God's hand at work more than enough times to know to put my trust in Him. He had this figured out. He knew what he was doing. We were just the tools God was using to spread His love to those in need in our community. All we had to do was to keep trusting and keep loving.

As I put that can of peaches on the shelf beside the two pudding cups, I thought about that verse in Galatians, "The fruit of the Spirit is love...". (Galatians 5: 22). I guess the Apostle Paul put Love first for a reason when he wrote that verse. And I guess the fruit of the spirit does sometimes come in a can.



Emily Fern is the Community Missions Coordinator at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Whitby, ON.

* name has been changed

"The fruit of the Spirit is love..."

Galatians 5: 22

Food Security in Nicaragua

by Denise Van Wissen

Juan José hammers together a couple of scraps of wood to form a rustic cross, and the children decorate it with ragged fake flowers and a hula-hula type adornment. Their mother, María, places the fancy cross in a prominent spot in their dusty front yard. You might think it is marking a grave for the family pet or even a family member. But no, May 3 is Día de la Cruz, the day that rural farming families (known as '*campesinos*') plant their crosses in the hopes of assuring that the first winter rains will come.

Meanwhile in Managua, eight-year-old Jorge pulls a shirt on with his shorts, slips into his worn flip flops, and heads out with a cheap plastic juice pitcher and a few coins. He

walks a block or two to a neighbour's house, where the lady sells cooked beans and tortillas. Other neighbours sell beans, but *doña* (Mrs.) Hortensia usually gives him the full ten pesos worth even if he only has seven or eight. Today, he has all ten pesos, but the beans don't fill his pitcher, and doña Hortensia explains that the price of beans in the market has risen again.

In Nicaragua, the rainy season (known as Winter) usually starts in May, and continues through September, while Summer, the dry season seems to drag on past December, through February, and into oven-hot April.

This year, we thought the rainy season had arrived right on time with a few heavy downpours in early May, but then there was nothing for the rest of the month.

Some farmers have lost all their seeds. Those whose sprouted seeds did survive will have their harvest reduced due to the lack of continued precipitation. They are hoping and praying for better rains for the second planting in August.

What comes to mind when you think of food security? A replete kitchen pantry? Grocery stores with abundant food choices? Local food banks? Homeless people? Church food drives? Your own fridge and freezer with ample food?

Here, in Nicaragua, food security—or the lack of food security—is illustrated by the vignettes above. It's all about food production—of agriculture, crops, and climate change. It is about people, families, and children on one side and droughts, failed crops, rising food prices, and food scarcities on the other. There are official definitions of food security, but to paraphrase, food security exists when everyone has enough safe and nutritious food for their physical needs and in accordance with their food preferences.

Food security is intimately related to climate change, a very hot topic (pun intended!) these days. With this year's arrival of El Niño, Canada has had some good news; a milder winter is predicted, but for Nicaragua, it brings drought. El Niño is a cyclical climate phenomenon of unusually warm temperatures in the equatorial Pacific, which causes changes in rainfall and temperature in other parts of the globe.

Warnings have already been sounded about impending food problems for Nicaraguans living in the 'dry corridor'—an arid region in the northeast and centre of the country. This area encompasses 33 of Nicaragua's 153 municipalities, and is characterized by low rainfall and high poverty levels. After last year's drought and its record reductions in rainfall, which caused already impoverished rural farmers to lose their first planted seed, they didn't

have seeds for the second planting in August, when rainfall conditions improved.

Fortunately, two of The Presbyterian Church in Canada/ Presbyterian World Service & Development's partner organizations, CEPAD and SOYNICA, are working with communities in the dry corridor.

In the municipality of San Juan de Río Coco, food production is quite good, but for certain cultural reasons, people don't always make good use of all of what they grow for their own consumption, and the children suffer from high rates of malnutrition. SOYNICA has organized and trained a group of young people from eight communities to serve as nutrition promoters. The promoters show their neighbours how to make optimal use of all the foods they harvest, and which ones are best as first foods for babies. The families of San Juan de Río Coco are improving their children's nutritional status, and their household food security with SOYNICA's help.

The CEPAD team recently visited new communities in the Teustepe municipality, situated around the artificial lake which dried up with last year's drought and was featured in news articles about the dire situation. These communities rely on the lake water for their daily activities and also fish in Lake Canoas. CEPAD tries to help small-scale farmers adapt to the changing rainfall patterns, decreasing their vulnerability to

climate change, and improving their food security.

The drought was still ongoing last year when CEPAD joined up with other organizations of ACT (Action by Churches Together) to put together a proposal for funds to help some of the worst-affected communities. This is an example of an emergency food security situation, calling for relief measures. When the ACT funding came through, CEPAD distributed material to rural families for making microdams (for water catchment) and simple irrigation systems, and seeds for home gardens.

How people access their food varies between rural and urban Nicaragua, but both Juan José and Maria's farming family in the countryside, and little Jorge's family in the big city, have a human right to food security, and to have enough healthy food 365 days a year, rain or shine. This is the challenge we work towards.

Denise van Wissen is a nutritionist working with CEPAD, one of The Presbyterian Church in Canada's partners in Nicaragua. Denise develops reference materials and leads educational workshops on current nutrition topics. She works to support families by bringing new ideas and resources. She is supported by Presbyterians Sharing. She is married and the mother of two active boys. For more information on Denise, please visit her blog, http://pccweb.ca/missionblog/denise-van-wissen/.

Prayer for Denise Van Wissen

Dear God, we pray for Denise. We thank you for her many years of service as a nutritionist in Central America and we prayer for her current work with the Council of Protestant Churches of Nicaragua (CEPAD). Give her wisdom as she assists CEPAD in their work to provide better food security. Assist her as she supports families, and trains others, especially women, in Nicaragua. Be with Denise's family, her husband, and two young boys. Bless them all as they serve you in Nicaragua.

In Jesus' name we prayer. Amen.

Where is God?

St. Timothy Presbyterian Church is a church with two congregations: a Korean speaking ministry (KSM) and an English speaking ministry (ESM). The KSM congregation consists of 1st generation Korean immigrants and the ESM congregation is made up of their children—2nd and 3rd generation Korean Canadians, as well as other ethnic and Caucasian members. The women in both congregations vibrantly serve the church in various aspects; not only are they the backbone of their families, but that of the spiritual family at church as well.

One of the vital gatherings at St. Timothy is our Wednesday Bible Study group where we gather every Wednesday, fervently studying the Word of God under the leadership of the Rev. In Kee Kim, our senior minister. This group has been gathering for the past nine years and has been through so much together. Weekly sharing consists of deep insights of the Bible, as well as the joys and struggles of life. Their passion for God is not contained only within the Bible study group, but overflows to all aspects of church life as well as the lives of other members in the congregation. Here, three of our bible study group members share their testimony of the spiritual journey we take together.

God is where love and community is ... and I know where to find Him. For me, it is at my Wednesday morning Women's Bible Study. God is never just in one place I know, but when I'm searching for God and He seems far away, I am pretty well guaranteed to find Him there.

I've been going to this Bible study for about, oh, maybe eight or nine years. I'm not sure how it first came about—all I know is that the senior minister in our church firmly believes that it is by getting to know the Bible and its contents better that we will be led to the truth and come to know God. I believe he is right.

We are a small group of women, closely knit—not cliquey, just closely knit. We gather together every Wednesday morning from about 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.. I believe if time permitted, many of us would be there the entire day. Sometimes as few as five of us make it there, sometimes we squeeze tightly around the table with 11 or 12 of us. Our numbers don't really seem to matter, as each session brings on a synergy of its own. I should mention, those numbers include our ministers (usually two) who faithfully come to teach and guide us and also, be one of us. We are closely knit by our shared interest—a better understanding of the Bible and a closer relationship with God.

Over coffee and snacks, which we take turns to provide, we listen to our senior pastor, the Rev. In Kee Kim, as he shares his knowledge of the Bible—its history, culture, and socio-political context. Through this rich background, so lovingly prepared and delivered for us, we are able to better see and understand what it is that we are reading. This then leads to a discussion of what it is we think we understand. While we regard and revere Rev. Kim as our minister and teacher, during this time of discussion, he also becomes one of us and we speak openly, questioning, pondering, sharing…lots of sharing. This is key. I make note of the significance, beauty, and power in these two points: 1) that the Rev. Kim, being male, is able to be one of us, enabling us to share of ourselves so openly, and 2) that we, as women, share of ourselves so openly with him and one another.

Though learning together, communicating with each other, and being there, we have come to experience glimpses of God's amazing presence and grace in our lives. Our Bible study has evolved from a time of complaining about life's challenges and disappointments to a time of shared excitement and thirst for what the Bible has to reveal. We've even gone as far as to refer to ourselves, jokingly and fondly, as Bible Study junkies.

I was not a Christian. I was a spiritual person, but not a Christian. I look back and am amazed at how much I've changed in those years and yet I also look back and am amazed

how painfully slow and stuck I continue to be.

Before: I forced myself to attend, being glad of the occasional legitimate excuse that made me unable to attend on a particular Wednesday.
Now: I make it known to those around me that I am not available on Wednesday mornings because that is when my Bible study is.

Before: I could never get through my homework of assigned readings and memory verses and had to show up pretending to know what was being discussed.
Now: I am drawn to reading the Bible and related materials to the point where I feel I need to hide my doing so, so as not to appear obsessive.

Before: I made it clear that I was only interested in learning about the Bible; that I was not Christian.
Now: I am baptized and find it hard to temper my enthusiasm about God.

Before: I was a rapidly aging middle aged woman.
Now: I am a wide eyed child, unable to control my curiosity and excitement.

Before: I was fearful and claustrophobic.
Now: I find joy and peace and beauty. I feel alive!

Yes, I believe I have found God. Years of preparation through this Bible study has made me able to recognize that I have.

What we experience in this Bible study is so precious that it must be shared. And so, we do. Women from within our church and from without our church have come and gone, and then they come again when able. Our numbers grow and shrink, and then grow again as life's circumstances change. It is organic. It is alive.

~Maeng Hong

I'm not sure exactly how our Wednesday Women's Group Meeting started nine years ago. I remember talking to a fellow Sunday school teacher and we discovered that we were both searching for something. There was a sense of loneliness and disconnectedness even within our church community where we served for many years. Perhaps we hoped this emptiness could be assuaged by connecting to each other through "deep and serious" conversations which we felt were not possible during the usual after service fellowship time each Sunday. So we approached another Sunday school teacher about starting a weekly gathering and she soon called our first meeting.

In the beginning, as our Bible study leader, the Rev. Kim often recalls, "We were a loud group of women complaining about everything from unromantic husbands, rebellious children, dirty socks on the floor, and the ever present dishes in the kitchen sink." After venting, we would of course give each other our own two cents worth of advice. The Rev. Kim

would then from time to time, warn us of guising old wives' wisdom as pseudo theology and try to steer our attention to the Bible.

It is impossible to see how and when the changes took place. It is only as I look back that I realize we are not quite the same group of women we were back then. Somewhere along the line, as God's words were being planted, we began to truly dig deeply into the scriptures in our meetings. As we grew more entrenched in the study of the scriptures we began to heal and grow in many ways.

Over these past years, some members of our group have gone through very difficult life challenges with much suffering. Some have dealt with debilitating illnesses and others endured bouts of clinical depressions. And now recently in my own life, I find myself faced with the threat of possibly losing a family member to an illness, one of my utmost worst fears, putting my faith to the test.

On many of our mornings, some of our sisters would come even as they were battling an illness just to sit and listen, too tired to talk much. Yes, as we were taught, life is indeed precarious. But I have witnessed from the quiet faith of my sisters, that while God may allow us to go through turbulent times, His grace continues and so we are able to stand resilient through life's storms.

I am thankful to the ladies for sharing their lives with me these past nine years. Although I am afraid of what the future might hold, I have learned much from their examples, and am strengthened by their presence in my life.

I am thankful to the Rev. Kim for faithfully planting seeds and patiently waiting, encouraging us to question and to voice our doubts and fears. He has endured our complacencies and accepted us in our failures, teaching us all the while, that it is God who started His good work in us, and it is God who will bring us to completion.

~Kee Choe

I joined the Wednesday Bible Study four years ago when the Rev. Kim asked me to give it a try. Since then, I have never looked forward to anything more eagerly than the Wednesday Bible Study.

Even though I attend a Catholic Church on Sundays, on each Wednesday we listen together to the beautifully prepared messages by the Rev. Kim. His messages are priceless gifts, a motivating catalyst for the week!

Sometimes, I share what I learn from the Bible Study with my family members, and to me that is scattering the seeds for continual growth in faith, hope, and love. I am thankful to the Rev. Kim for inviting me four years ago, and thankful to everyone for sharing their spiritual goals. Also another thanks to the Rev. Jane Yoon for her genuine efforts and zeal to lead us to love and serve God.

~Jackie Kim

Together We Can!

Hope lives here

In response to the overwhelming need in Toronto for a program that intentionally supports one of the cities most marginalized and victimized populations, ARISE Ministry provides outreach, case management, and pastoral care for women involved in or seeking to exit the sex trade. For those working the streets, we provide an outreach ministry and the start of a relationship.

ARISE

Please send your donation to: Women's Missionary Society

50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, ON M3C 1J7 800-619-7301 wmsfinance@presbyterian.ca

Together with WMS groups, congregations, and mission-minded people We Can make a difference.

The name ARISE has a dual meaning; as an acronym it stands for Advocacy and Reclaiming those Involved in the Sex-trade through Empowerment. We advocate for the rights, goals, and dreams of women, youth, and children who have become victims of sex-trafficking. Those involved in the sex-trade have been devalued through coercion, exploitation, abuse, isolation, and prejudice. ARISE helps to empower these individuals through relationships and goal setting so they can advocate for themselves and reclaim their lives.

However, beyond the acronym, the deeper theological meaning comes from the parallels between the bent-over woman who Jesus heals (Luke 13:10–17) and the lived experiences of those involved in the sex-trade, who have been bent-over and crippled by exploitation, trauma, abuse, and addiction. Jesus healed the woman in the Gospel and she immediately arose, stood up straight, and began praising God for the wonderful things God had done. It is our hope, prayer, and firm belief that God will do wonderful things in the lives of these victims by allowing them to arise, stand up straight, and begin praising.

"Sex is all I'm good for, maybe that's my destiny, you know like God's plan for me, to be a prostitute," explains 15-year-old Katelyn.* Katelyn grew up in one of Toronto's most infamous housing projects. She was sexually abused by a family friend. When she told a trusted adult about the abuse, she was met with denial and blame. Katelyn carried this hurt around. It was not long before a pimp took notice and monopolized on it. At the age of 13, Katelyn became part of a child-prostitution ring working across the province. ARISE ministry started a relationship with Katelyn; trust was earned and goals were set, including housing and returning to school. She has left prostitution and is starting to believe in herself. Today Katelyn stands straight.

* Name has been changed.

ARISE Ministry

- works with women, youth, and children who are victims of sex trafficking and/or have worked in the sex trade;
- provides case management for up to five women per month;
- provides street outreach to the prostitution strolls one night a week in partnership with Yonge Street Mission; and
- builds partnerships with organizations that serve at-risk children and youth with the hope of preventing involvement in the sex-trade.

Thankful: Yesterday,

Thanksgiving Worship Service

Preparation: Before the service, hand out three pieces of paper: one labelled 'Yesterday, one labelled 'Today', and one labeled 'Tomorrow'. These will be used during the prayers of the people. Before the Benediction everyone will be encouraged to take these papers home and post them on their fridge, or in another prominent place in the home, to remind them of God's work in their lives.

Note: The scriptures quoted in the reflection are the CEV translation of the Bible. It would be best to change these to whatever version your worshipping community uses, before giving the reflection.

Call to Worship:

Leader: Give thanks to God!
For joy, for laughter, for abundant blessings of every kind.
Give thanks to God, at all times and for everything:
for struggles, for solitude, for fears.
Give thanks to God at all times and for everything.
In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

People: We thank God that, in Christ, our joys as well as our pain, our losses as well as our laughter, are in God's heart and hands.

oday, and Tomorrow!

by Rebekah Mitchell

Hymn: 803 Come, ye thankful people, come

Scripture: Psalm 66, Thessalonians 5:16–18

Reflection:
Thankful: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow!

Today we celebrate Thanksgiving—and like all of the big holidays, it can be a struggle with how to speak about a day like today. I think that's because what else is there to say:
Be thankful.
The end.
We can all go home now.

Thanksgiving seems a little obvious and that's the difficulty. It seems obvious that as a people who believe in salvation—in the forever enduring love of God, that lays down and dies for us, that rises again and

breaks the bond of sin and of death FOREVER—that we should remain thankful.

It seems obvious that as a people who believe in salvation, we should arise each morning and lie down each night with thankfulness in our hearts. No matter what else is going on, no matter what battles we face, what trials we endure, what shadows come our way to cast darkness over the light of our joy, at the end of the day—no matter what—we are forgiven. We are set free and we should always remain thankful.

It sounds obvious. But like most obvious things it's hard to live that way. Because we face battles and trials and shadows. Because worse than all of these, is the sometimes exhausting monotony of life. The 9-to-5 grind or the Monday-to-Friday slog. Or whatever the routine is in your life that plays over and over. (I have heard from retired friends that they are busier than ever!)

This makes me think of this great internet meme—one of those joke photos that people post on pinterest or Facebook. It says: The Never-Ending Story when you were a kid…and there's a picture of Atreyu and the Luck Dragon *(If you have no idea who Atreyuor the Luck Dragon are, they are characters from a movie that came out about 25-years ago called The Never Ending Story. It is an epic kid's movie about saving the world.)* Below that it says: The never ending story now that you're an adult…and there's a picture of a pile of laundry.

Because seriously—why can't the laundry just END sometime. Why can't the dishes just be done? Or what you've vacuumed, STAY vacuumed? Or whatever it is that is the little chore or task that you repeat over and over and over again. We all have them, they are part of life—these jobs that are done only to have to be done again.

Because life goes on. And life is so often made up of repetitive tasks and routines. And those things have a way of dulling our shine, of making it hard for us to remember to be thankful. It is hard to remember that we have been given the gift of salvation and everything else we have—whether it be a little or a lot is simply icing on a very, very good cake.

So what do we do? How do we fight routine, fight monotony, fight the repetitive dulling nature of life? Well, if we take our cue from our Old Testament reading today … we begin by remembering, by telling the story, by saying once again what God has done for us.

> Come and see the fearsome things our God has done!
> When God made the sea dry up, our people walked across, and because of him, we celebrated there.
> His mighty power rules forever, and nothing the nations do can be hidden from him. So don't turn against God.
> All of you people, come praise our God! Let his praises be heard.
> God protects us from death and keeps us steady.
> Our God, you tested us, just as silver is tested.
> You trapped us in a net and gave us heavy burdens.
> You sent war chariots to crush our skulls.
> We travelled through fire and through floods, but you brought us to a land of plenty.

This is the story of Exodus—of a people set free. Slaves no more. They tell the story to remember that freedom in the midst of laundry and dishes and all the other little things that get in the way of living thankfully.

This is what the ministers in our churches preach each week. They get up and preach this because they want us to remember what God has done for us individually, and all that God has done for us as an entire group—so that we can all live thankfully.

We know the story matters and the story needs to be told. We know that God has already done so very much for us, and we need to remember that in order to live thankful lives.

In ancient Israel, in David's time, they wrote Psalms that told the story of God's kindness to his chosen people. They gathered together to sing those Psalms, to remember to be thankful for the things God did yesterday and to remember that

God was a powerful part of their past. We do the same each Sunday. (Hopefully, we do it during the week in our homes, as well.) We tell the story each week to fight monotony that dulls the shine of our faith.

We have to remember. We have to be thankful for what God did for us yesterday.

We also have to have our eyes open to today because today God is doing something in your life, in my life, in the life of all who love and serve him. And if we are not careful—we will quite simply miss it. It'll zoom past us like a million other moments that we didn't notice. Sometimes we don't see well what is happening around us, especially if we are carrying a heavy burden, or struggling through a difficult season that can cloud the way we see things.

Just like the fog that gathers on the windshield in your car on cold mornings, our emotions, the stresses we are feeling, the hurts or losses we are trying to come to grips with, these things fog up our vision and make it difficult for us to see. Sometimes the best way to clear that fog is to stop and make a list of the things that you need to thank God for right now. This moment, this instant. Not from yesterday, not for tomorrow, but for right now.

Leave salvation off the list—because it's an easy one to come up with. Leave the big things off the list—your health, your home, your income—those things that are fairly constant in your life. Limit yourself to things that are only happening today.

What is the thing that you will do today that you don't get to do every day? What is something unique at this moment? Make a list, focus on what you are thankful for right now—and that fog begins to lift, just like when the car warms up and the heat begins to clear the windshield.

I'm not saying the burdens will leave you—but it's hard to be so weighed down by them when you are focusing on the things you have to be thankful for. That's just a fact.

The Psalmist writes:

I will bring sacrifices into your house, my God,
and I will do what I promised when I was in trouble.
I will sacrifice my best sheep and offer bulls and goats on your altar.

Now, we don't do the animal sacrifice in worship anymore, and I'm grateful for that. However, we do bring our own sacrifices into this place. The money we will put into the offering plate is a sacrifice—something we could have used for our own enjoyment that instead we chose to give up in order to bless someone else.

Someone has worked on the music that will be a part of this service, sacrificing time and effort so that others might be touched by the musical praise offered in this hour. Others have spent their time planning this service. Some of us simply have given up this time, time that many others might have spent in a different way—we've given our time to be here to show our thankfulness, to wipe the fog from our eyes and to recognize the things God is doing for us right now, today.

We have to remember and be thankful for what God did yesterday. We have to be aware so that we can give thanks for what God is doing today. We also have to trust that God will continue to be at work tomorrow. There is an old saying that I love—we may not know what the future holds, but we know WHO holds the future.

I'm not saying that makes it easy—uncertainty is a constant in our world—but my friends, it is a blessing to know that God holds the future. That's called hope—and it is vital to our faith, vital to our lives, and vital to what it means to live thankful.

The Psalmist writes:
All who worship God, come here and listen; I will tell you everything God has done for me.
I prayed to the Lord, and I praised him.
If my thoughts had been sinful, he would have refused to hear me.
But God did listen and answered my prayer.
Let's praise God!
He listened when I prayed, and he is always kind.

It's that last line —He is always kind. That's a promise.
A word to be fulfilled.
A vow for the future.
He is always kind.
Tomorrow is in his hands and he is always kind.

Today or tomorrow—earlier this weekend or at another time entirely—you will gather with others to celebrate Thanksgiving. Remember what God did for you yesterday. Be aware, in the midst of that celebration, of the things God is

doing for you today. Trust in the fact that God will give you more reasons to be thankful tomorrow.

Hymn: 410 Joyful, joyful we adore thee

Prayers of the People:

You were given three pieces of paper labelled 'Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow' before our service began. During this prayer, you will be given time to write one item on each piece of paper. Write something that God did for you in your past on the sheet titled 'Yesterday'. Write something God is doing for you right now on the sheet titled 'Today'. Write something that you are placing into God's hands, trusting that God will work it out in a way that will bring you to a place of thankfulness on the sheet titled 'Tomorrow'.

Let us pray, Gracious God, accept our thanks for all that you have given, are giving, and will give us.
For the things that we can look back upon:
The stories we can tell of your healing, your providing, your blessing presence in our lives.
There are so many stories, and each one is a reminder of how you have worked for the good of each person here.
As each of us takes a moment to write down one thing that you have already done for us,
We give you thanks.
(Pause to give people time to write on their 'Yesterday' sheet.)

Abiding God, you are here among us right at this very moment.
For you have promised that wherever even two or three of us gather together,
You will be also.
We are thankful for your unshakable Spirit who accompanies us through every day, every trial, every joy.
As we take a moment to write down something you are doing right now for each of us,
We give you thanks.
(Pause to give people time to write on their 'Today' sheet.)

God who holds the future,
We do our best to put our trust in you.
We believe in you, only help our unbelief.
Give us the strength and peace we need to give up control,
To let you take the wheel and direct us where we need to go.
As we take a moment to write down something each of us needs to trust you with,

We give you thanks.
(Pause to give people time to write on their 'Tomorrow' sheet.)

Our Father who art in Heaven,
You know the things each of us has written down,
Help us to remember the times you have shown us grace and mercy yesterday,
Help us to be aware of the ways that you are showing us grace and mercy today,
Help us to trust you to continue to show us grace and mercy tomorrow. Amen.

Offering:

Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop.
But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop.
In light of God's generosity in planting seeds in our lives,
Let us give generously as our offerings are now received.

Offering Prayer:

When we plant a seed, O God, we trust that something life-giving is going on in the dirt, even if we can't see it. In time, the harvest comes and our patience is rewarded because you made the seed grow. Bless what we plant today. Help us to live in patience and trust, until the day when we celebrate the harvest with you. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

Hymn: 457 Now thank we all our God

Blessing:

I want to encourage you to take home those sheets you wrote upon during the Prayers of the People. Post them on your fridge, or on your bathroom mirror. May they remind you to live thankfully every day, because God has been at work for you yesterday, God is at work for you today, and God will be at work for you tomorrow. Amen.

The Rev. Rebekah Mitchell is the Associate Minister at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Brampton, ON. She is passionate about helping people of all ages understand and grow in their relationship with God. On a more personal note, Rebekah loves to knit, to hunt through yarn shops for that perfect ball of yarn, and to spend time with friends and family.

TOGETHER WE CAN!

Maya–Mam Women, Guatemala

Indigenous Maya-Mam people living in the western highlands of Guatemala have a rich culture, yet face discrimination and deep-rooted poverty borne out of decades of civil war. A lack of economic opportunity and environmental concerns, such as climate change, encroaching mining operations, and deforestation make it difficult for families to break the cycles of poverty.

In an area where 95% of the population lives on less than $2 a day and over 75% of children under the age of five suffer from chronic malnutrition, food insecurity is a daily concern.

Fortunately, we have the ability to change the lives of women, men, and children by supporting PWS&D's food security project in Guatemala through the WMS.

Together

with WMS groups, congregations, and mission-minded people

We Can

make a difference.

95% live on less than $2 a day

This Together We Can! project will enable families in Guatemala to eat more and better food by improving agricultural practices which will enable the soil to produce abundantly. Growing a variety of crops—including fruits, vegetables and protein-rich beans—will have a healthy nutritional impact on families.

Youth and children will plant school vegetable gardens to educate about the importance of and improve access to nutritious food. Advocacy with community and municipal bodies will ensure that food security is a high priority in future planning. Indigenous land rights, women's empowerment, and cultural identity will also be addressed through the project.

WMS

Together We Can! projects are WMS campaigns

Please send your donation to: Women's Missionary Society
50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, ON M3C 1J7
800-619-7301 wmsfinance@presbyterian.ca

Ontario Presbyterian C

by Katherine Allen

Travelling with the Ontario Presbyterian Chorus is a little like living the Psalms, we sing God's praises, spreading the gospel through music. It is an experience that creates fellowship, friendship, and the opportunity to reach out and minister to others. Music often distracts the mind from whatever problems are troubling the heart and it has a way of creating a sense of peace, hope, and inspiration.

The Ontario Presbyterian Chorus had a wonderful twelve day journey through the Maritime Provinces in June. As always there were several highlights, especially singing in many congregations where we really appreciated the warm reception we received. We also enjoyed visiting the many tourist sites.

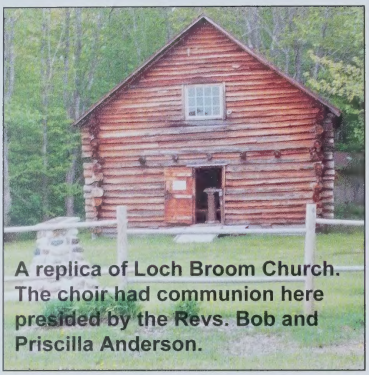
One highlight was having communion at the old Loch Broom church in Nova Scotia, presided over by the Rev. Bob and the Rev. Priscilla Anderson. This was a very moving experience for all of us as and our director expressed that he has been wishing for us to share communion together as a choir. It was even more meaningful in this historic church that was built in 1973. It is a replica of the original log church and was built as a reminder of the formation of Presbyterianism in the Pictou County region. In 1767, a group of six families immigrated to Pictou on the brig, 'Betsy'. Then in 1773,

rus tours the Maritimes

after a 77-day voyage the 'Hector' arrived with the first Scottish settlers (36 families and 30 single men), nearly all Presbyterian. The first minister was the Rev. James Drummond McGregor who arrived as a missionary from Portmore, Scotland, in 1786. He brought with him three men who formed the first Kirk Session.

Psalm 98 and Psalm 150 are two of the pieces that we sing in the chorus. Psalm 98 can be found in an old Scottish Psalter dating back to the 1700s or before that. Singing the Psalms is particularly meaningful to the Presbyterian Churches in Nova Scotia, especially within Pictou County on account of the history of Presbyterianism and Scottish settlers in the 1700s. At First Presbyterian Church in New Glasgow, we saw a copy of an original song book entitled "Collections of Sacred Vocal Music," dated 1803. The music for Psalm 98 would have been included in this book.

A second highlight was thanks to an email I received before we left to begin our trip. The recreation director of Alderwood Seniors Home in Baddeck requested a concert. We accepted and sang an impromptu concert to the seniors, which was held at Knox Presbyterian Church. Approximately 17 seniors were transported to the church and one of these women, who was 101, was wheeled in on a stretcher. The joy in her face, and that of the others, as we sang was very meaningful and very moving. This concert was also open to the congregation and community.



A replica of Loch Broom Church. The choir had communion here presided by the Revs. Bob and Priscilla Anderson.

Another highlight was on June 14 when we participated in the worship at Wolfville Baptist Church in the morning, and during the evening at King's Presbyterian Church in New Minas. The connection we have with these two churches is that in1997 the choir sang at Wolfville Baptist Church to raise funds to build a Presbyterian Church in New Minas. At that time, the choir gave a significant donation towards this fund. This year, we had the pleasure of singing at the church we helped to build which was especially meaningful for those of us who were in the choir in 1997.

Other churches we sang in included: Zion Presbyterian Church, Charlottetown; Central Queen's United in Hunter River, PEI; St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Sydney Mines, NS; St. Andrew's United Church, Stewiacke, NS. At St. Andrew's Stewiacke, there was a memorial on the wall of a Presbyterian minister, the Rev. William James MacKenzie, who was the first Presbyterian missionary to Korea around 1894–1895.

Each concert featured a "patriotic moment" in which we sought to express thanks for the sacrifices of men and women who have historically stood on guard for our country and its values and who aid the oppressed beyond our shores. To drive home the point, one of our members, Ralph Garbe, who was born in Germany in 1938 of a Jewish mother, expressed thanks to all those who were part of the Allied victory over Hitler, which ultimately saved his life and the life of his family. After our concert at King's Presbyterian Church, New Minas, a member of the congregation, now 99 years old, asked to speak with Ralph. The gentleman revealed that he had been part of the Dutch Underground which aided Jews during WWII. It

was a poignant meeting for both.

As part of this time, a moment of silent prayer was observed, followed by our National Anthem which included the verse:

Ruler supreme, who hearest
humble prayer,
Hold our dominion within thy
loving care;
Help us to find O God, in thee, a
lasting, rich reward,
As waiting for the Better Day,
We ever stand on guard.
God keep our land glorious and
free
O Canada! We stand on guard for
thee,
O Canada! We stand on guard for
thee.

Our motto is that we are a choir with a message, a mission, and a vision for a lost and needy world. As we traveled, our message of God's love and peace was spread through our ministry of music. Our mission was to provide for the needs of the congregations we sang in. Our vision was exploring God's creation.

Katherine Allen retired three years ago after working 40 years in the WMS office. Katherine has been a member of the Ontario Presbyterian Chorus for 25 years and is currently the secretary for the chorus. For engagements contact Katherine at katherineallen@sympatico.ca or check out their website http://pccweb.ca/ontario-presbyterian-chorus.

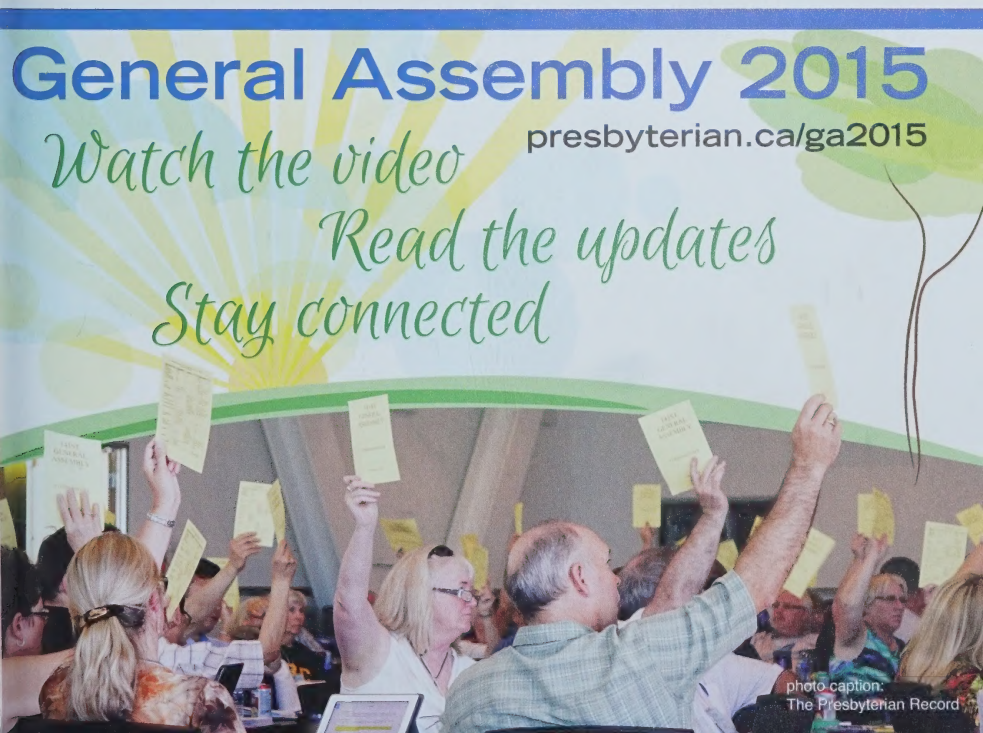


photo caption:
The Presbyterian Record

Simple Sheep

By Sharon Dow

During a recent trip to Scotland, I visited a sheep farm. The resident shepherd raises and trains Border Collies as sheep dogs and did an extensive demonstration of their skills. But my attention was on the sheep who moved to the east, to the west, around in circles, out to the field, back to the front, all at the voice of the shepherd.

When they strayed, he gave directions to the dogs to get them back where they should be. His series of whistles was known both to the dogs and the sheep. There was no question of hearing the piercing sound as it travelled over the field.

The question was; would they obey his voice?

As I watched, my thoughts turned to Christ as the Good Shepherd and I marvelled at how we wander just like the sheep of this pasture. We hear his voice, but do we listen? Do we obey his leading? If we listen to the voice of Christ and move where he wants us to go, we will be under the care and protection of our shepherd.

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.
(John 10: 27 NIV)

The sheep seemed directionless. I couldn't help but notice that they seemed simple and slow-witted. They need a shepherd! They wander as far as twelve miles away from the home field, but the shepherd walks the distance to minister to their needs. We, like them, wander.

How comforting to know that our Good Shepherd seeks us and gently brings us back to the fold.

Are you under the care and protection of the Good Shepherd? Do you hear his voice and listen to him?

Sharon Dow is a graduate of the University of New Brunswick with an education degree and has twenty-seven years' experience teaching Junior High, serving as vice-principal, and finally as principal of a Christian Day School. She is the author of three Christian Historical Novels, Antipas: Martyr, Pergamum: Satan's Throne, *and* Huldah: Prophetess. *Sharon also enjoys speaking to groups to share her writing and encourage others in their Christian walk.*

2015: The Year of the Gift Annuity

proVisionaries
Planting seeds of hope.
For generations to come.

Felicity Alexander

A Presbyterian annuitant who has good reasons to celebrate

"Some years ago I attended a couple of Planned Giving seminars and, after discussions with my son—who is a CA and a Chartered Financial Analyst—I decided that a gift annuity would allow me to leave something to my church when I die, but still enjoy the benefit of income from the money while I am alive. So that's like having my cake and eating it, too. Here's what happened...

"In January 2010, I wrote a cheque for $20,000 to the Trustee Board of The Presbyterian Church in Canada and got an immediate charitable donation receipt for $5,600. I receive $1,070 in income from the annuity every year, and, thanks to the CRA, the taxable portion of that annual amount is so small that there's nothing to pay. It's a win-win situation!"

The above words are adapted from a presentation Felicity Alexander made to her home congregation, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, in Brampton, Ontario, on the benefits of gift annuities for both donors and the church.

To learn how you can have your cake and it too, contact Sheryl in the Planned Giving Office for a free, no-obligation gift annuity quote.

What will your legacy be?

The Presbyterian Church in Canada
50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, ON M3C 1J7
ssutton@presbyterian.ca • 1-800-619-7301 ext. 265
presbyterian.ca/pg

The above example is for illustrative purposes only. Gift annuity rates are subject to change.

News from Cariboo Presbyterian Church ministry

Exerts from *Northern Light: The Official Newsletter of The Cariboo Presbyterian Church* (Spring Summer 2015)

Transitions in the Cariboo
By Shannon Bell-Wyminga
Change is inevitable—except in vending machines.

Since the mission of the Cariboo is not a vending machine, we can expect that we will go through changes. This ministry from its inception has been about constant change. House churches grow; people grow up, move away, or pass on; the faces in the living room come and go; some churches cease while others multiply.

Those of us who have been a part of this ministry over the past decades can look back and see with wonder how things have changed, grown and developed over those years. Only a few of us have been around since the beginning. (I can count them on my fingers!) One of the biggest changes is what we have experienced in the past few months—this ministry moving forward without the leadership of David and Linda Webber.

It is a tribute to their hard work that the mission of the Cariboo Presbyterian Church has not changed, but continues to be lived out in various forms all over the region. We will continue to shift, transform, and grow as we walk forward together to carry forth God's vision given to the Webbers.

We have much to celebrate in the transition time. Two house churches in Williams Lake now meet and carry out their ministries with their own leadership, not requiring one of the full-time pastors to keep things going. Bruce Wilcox has been called out of volunteer ministry to full-time work among us, bringing his many gifts and fulfilling the vision of raising up local leadership from among the people of the congregation. Members of each house church participate faithfully in their own unique ways, serving the mission of Christ in each community.

This time also presents us with challenges. We have the opportunity within The Presbyterian Church in Canada to help the church as a whole begin to grapple with how to incorporate lay missionaries and other leaders into the decision-making structures of the church. This is beginning with the commissioning of elders to lead us in the sacraments, but needs to go much further as more and more churches in the future will need to consider how to be the church without a full-time paid minister.

As we move from a year and a half of having three full-time ministers back to having two, we will need to consider how to ensure that all the work that has been done in the past can continue to be done effectively and efficiently.

Financially we will continue to rely on the support of every member of the congregation as well as our faithful supporters in many other places. With this transition, the grant we have received from Presbyterians Sharing through Canadian Ministries for the Cariboo ministry position (now Bruce Wilcox) has been decreased this year to $11,500 from $20,000 in previous years. This is a significant reduction which we trust that God will help us to make up for.

The full grant for Jon and I for Native ministries remains the same. While we celebrate with the Webbers their time of rest and retirement, we are all called to journey together into the future, asking God what we might be called to do so that this mission of Christ can continue in the process of change and growth.

What new thing might the Lord show you? What aspect of ministry will you be led to move into?

What new way can you reach out to those in your community with the love of Christ? There is always pain with change, but we are kingdom builders. The Bible often describes the coming of the kingdom like a woman in labour. There is pain and hard work, but the results are spectacular! I started with a quote so will finish with one: If nothing ever changed, there'd be no butterflies.

Ts'ekookoh Dakelh 'Unzoo Weekend (Beautiful Dakelh Women Weekend)
by Shannon Bell-Wyminga

Beautiful Dakelh women. We have many of them in Ndazkoh, but not all are aware of the beauty that the Creator put in these precious daughters. A weekend away, May 1-3, was just the thing to encourage and affirm these women from our community. We left behind the worries and cares of family, community, and work to listen to the Dr. Cheryl Bear and Pastor Christina Dawson share the love of the Creator with us all. Cheryl is an internationally known singer, song-writer, pastor, and author who is proud of her Dakelh heritage. She is a band councilor with the Nadleh band (west of Prince George) and part of Street Church in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside where her husband Randy Barnetson is the pastor. Christina is the associate pastor of Street Church and comes from the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation on Vancouver Island.

Cheryl and Christina shared stories and scriptures that honoured the beautiful culture of the First Nations. Cheryl recounted some of her memories of the teaching of her

grandmothers and aunties, which line up with so many of the teachings of the Old Testament. She talked about cleansing ceremonies and pointed us to the cleansing that comes to us in Jesus. Christina shared experiences of how God has spoken to her and guided her in her life. She shared her regalia with the group as did Cheryl, both expressing the importance of their families and identity as First Nations women.

The weekend wasn't all just listening as we played games, did crafts, and ate way too much. Good thing we had to walk to get to the dining hall! Our worship was enhanced as many of us joined together around the big drum lifting our voices in words and chant that glorified Jesus.

And we prayed! We had the privilege of seeing God answer prayer on the Saturday evening.

We received word that there had been a serious vehicle accident involving three young men from our community. One of them was reported to be unconscious and unresponsive. His mother and grandmother were both with us at camp. We prayed for them before I drove them the two hours back to Quesnel to the hospital. We prayed and talked on the drive as well. When we got to the hospital we learned that this young man was ready to be released with only a broken arm and cracked ribs! The driver had to be sent for surgery in Prince George with a crushed hip and the other passenger had a bumped face. We all rejoiced in how our Creator had saved their lives.

We were grateful to be able to spend this weekend away together hearing about God's wonderful love for us as women. It was so important that our women could know that the Creator loves them as Dakelh women, affirming the good things

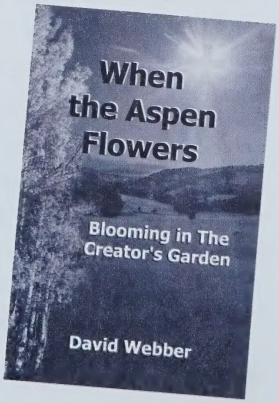
The Mission of Cariboo Presbyterian Church is to reach out with the love of Christ to people in rural and remote areas beyond the reach of the traditional church.

David Webber's fourth and latest book is now available at a special $5 autumn discount to members of the Women's Missionary Society.

To order copies email David directly at webberink@telus.net and he will send out your book(s) with an invoice.

Cost is $15 plus $5 shipping (total $20).

You can also order by writing:
David Webber
3460 Dunsmuir Rd. Lac La Hache BC, V0K 1T1



In the Society

Synodical

The Synodical of Southwestern Ontario responded to the invitation from Camp Kintail and attended Cake by the Lake on July 2. The Rev. Theresa McDonald Lee, and her husband, Johnathon Lee, enthusiastically welcomed everyone to camp. After a delicious lunch, with cake, we walked down to the chapel, with its beautiful setting among the trees and glimpses of Lake Huron below.

Camp staff led in singing before the service, and also the prayers and the reading of scripture. The Rev. John Congram, a former camp manager, spoke and his humour shone through as he talked about his experiences at camp, dealing with mice and garbage. However, he also mentioned the effect camp has on the lives of children. Johnathon then updated us on the camp. They have 80 counsellors and 1300 registrations so far this year, and are hoping for more. The ramp to the beach is complete, and they are working on a new area where older campers can camp out more independently.

Presbyterial

Barrie Presbyterial held their Annual Meeting at St. Andrew's Church, Huntsville, on May 11. The theme was Everything is Possible for Those Who Believe, and The Good News of the Gospel is Too Good to Keep to Ourselves (Mark 9:23).

Photo (left to right): Johnathon Lee, Rev. Theresa McDonald-Lee (Co-Executive Directors), and Shirley Miller.

President Mary Veale-Parker opened the meeting with prayer, and the Rev. George Anderson, minister of St. Andrew's, welcomed us. Elmvale WMS led the devotions and then the yearly reports were given. Elaine Steele presented the council report which included the two new Together We Can! projects.

After a delicious lasagna lunch, our speaker, Cathy Finlay, spoke on Fair Trade. She works to "fix poverty through love and respect." She shared slides of Nicaragua where she said that two-thirds of the population have no safe water and they live on 25 cents US a day. Fair trade offers a hand up not a hand out. The Fair Trade factories have better working

conditions and benefits such as health care, education, and technical training for the workers and their families.

Jill Pardy presented the Memorial Service for those who passed away in 2014, and Dorothy Ruddell installed the officers. The Rev. Peter Ruddell then closed the meeting with the Benediction.

~Jill Pardy

Brockville Presbyterial held their May Rally at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Kemptville, on May 29.

The Rev. Samer Kandalaft welcomed everyone and Judy Messenger presented St. Paul's with a copy of Certain Women Amazed Us.

President Janet Jones constituted the meeting with prayer, and Henny Donkesteeg led the music on the theme, Be Bold and Courageous, Reaching Out. Margaret Reynolds and Rosemary Rutley gathered ideas from the members on the theme. Examples from the Bible of people who God used, despite their frailties were shared. Special music was then provided by the St. Paul's Choral Group.

Catherine Blatch, Literature Secretary, offered new and sale-priced items as well as new mugs with the verse Joshua 1:9 and the WMS logo on them. The lending library was available as well.

Historian Donna Wilson reported on the 125th Anniversary of Morewood group on May 7. The Rev. May Ann Emig Munro was the guest speaker, the Rev. Bruce Kemp gave a solo, and Lois Beaton recounted their history of dedication to the mission of Christ. Janet Jones presented the group with a certificate of appreciation.

Janet Jones reported that the new Together We Can! projects were Guatemala and ARISE Ministry in East Toronto. Judy Messenger then explained the important of card making and everyone joined in making a card.

The Rev. Sarah Kim, Janet Brewer, and Joan Smith, from WMS Council, were then interviewed on the cutbacks in staff, less time on duty, closure of The Book Room, and the challenge of funding decreasing and the desire to move forward with new initiatives and insights. Plans have begun for the popular Women's Gathering for 2017 in Richmond Hill.

Locally, we plan to meet jointly with Synodical in Kemptville for our Fall Rally in September 2015 with the Rev. Paul McLean as our guest speaker.

~Donna Wilson

Local

Kensington Church WMS held their May meeting to honour their Associate Members and thank them for their support and interest. Grace Thornley-Brown was also honored for her 20 years of service as president. Refreshments included Jamaican patties.

Celebration of Ida White's 100th Birthday in Zurich on July 22, 2015

WMS members, former missionaries from India, family, and friends shared in this special celebration. Ida was bright and cheerful and interested in all that was happening as she talked with everyone that afternoon.

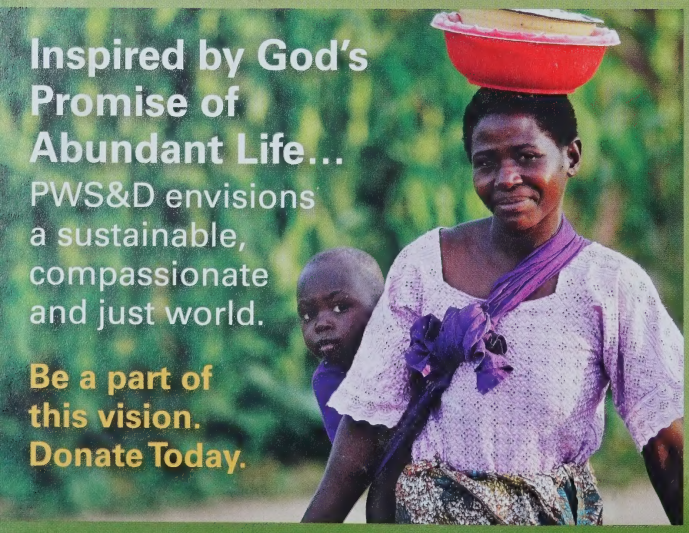
Ida was born in Walton and grew up in Goderich. After graduating from Alexandra Marine and General Hospital, she worked as a nurse at United Church's Mission in Hurst, ON. In 1941, she became Lt. White and went with 200 other Canadian nurses to serve in military hospitals in South Africa, Egypt, and Italy. She returned home to nurse in Goderich and later worked at the Huron County Children's Aid..

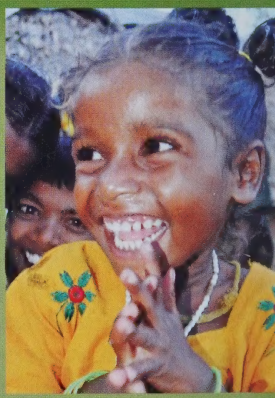
In 1952, Ida responded to an advertisement in *Glad Tidings* for a position as a public health nurse and missionary in India. After a year at Ewart College, Ida was sent to the Bhil Fields of Madhya Pradish Province. Ida served in India for 26 years before she returned home at the age of 64 to care for her sick mother.

Ida was a faithful member of the Arthur WMS Group and church in Goderich until she moved to the Bluewater Rest Home in Zurich, Ontario.

Ida credits her faith and personal relationship with Jesus, which began when

WE RESPOND


Inspired by God's Promise of Abundant Life...
PWS&D envisions a sustainable, compassionate and just world.
Be a part of this vision. Donate Today.



Presbyterian World Service & Development

50 Wynford Drive,
Toronto, ON M3C 1J7
1-800-619-7301 ext. 291
WeRespond.ca

she was a teenager, with the direction her life has taken. She always prayed for God's guidance at each crossroad she encountered during her long and productive life, reflecting on events, especially as she becomes a centenarian.

During these years, the one consistent thread running though her eventful and long life is her faith in God.

A great friend, Pauline Brown, a co-worker in the Jobat area in India, sent a letter to The Presbyterian Record on behalf of the people in the Bhil Field. They want to celebrate on Ida's 100th birthday—"we feel her life and witness for the Lord is well worth celebrating!"

The WMS wish to honour Ida as well for her many years of service for her Lord both in India, during her time in WWII and in Canada. May God continue to bless her and all the people she met over these 100 years!

Remembering

Mavis Hornsby
St. Andrew's
Presbyterian WMS,
Belleville ON

Lyla Page
St. Columba,
Belleville ON

Audrey C. Shannon
Sarah Dunning
Auxiliary, Dundas ON

Peggy Brown
Doreen Maue
Jean Rae
St. Andrew's WMS,
Kitchener, ON

Beryl Semple
Britton WMS,
Knox Presbyterian,
Listowel ON

Isobel Wooldridge and
Rebecca McLeod
Morewood Presbyterian
Church, Morewood ON

Be challenged

Be inspired

Learn more about mission

Subscribe to *Glad Tidings*

Subscription rate for 2016 is $15.00 plus applicable taxes

($16.95 in NB, NL, ON; $17.10 in PE; $17.25 in NS; and $15.75 in all other provinces)

PM40013283 R9517

Please report any errors/changes in address

Order from your local *Glad Tidings* contact person or contact:
Glad Tidings, 50 Wynford Drive,
Toronto, ON M3C 1J7
800-619-7301
gladtidings@presbyterian.ca

Glad Tidings

November/December 2015

Contents

IN THIS ISSUE

3 **Editorial**

4 **Hit Pause!**
by Patricia Anne Elford

8 **Welcome the Children (and their Parents)**
by Colleen Wood

12 **This Year I Put God on the Christmas List**
by Carol Penner

13 **Christmas Celebration at Ghanaian Presbyterian Church**
by Cynthia Breman

14 **Tumekutana 2015**
by Sarah Kim and Janet Brewer

18 **Elmina (Slave) Castle**
by Janet Brewer

21 **Call to Prayer**

30 **Study: ARISE, Sex-Trafficking**
by Rev. Deb Rapport

38 **Did I Do the Right Thing?**
by Victoria Stirling

41 **Mission in Action**

IN THE SOCIETY

42 **In the Society**

47 **Remembering**

Glad Tidings

November/December 2015

Volume 91, No. 6

EDITOR: Colleen Wood

DESIGN: Alexis McKeown

Published six times a year by the Women's Missionary Society of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Member of the Canadian Church Press.

Canada

Glad Tidings reports on aspects of the Women's Missionary Society on all levels. *Glad Tidings* challenges concerned Christians to reflect on their faith through articles and reports related to mission and social justice issues, locally, nationally, and internationally. *Glad Tidings* through its content, encourages readers to become informed, educated, inspired, and motivated to action. *GladTidings* provides a forum for a broad spectrum of opinion and information, thus the views expressed in features, news reports, letters, and book reviews are not necessarily endorsed by the WMS or by the Editor.

2015 subscription rate $15.00 plus applicable taxes: ON, NB, NL $16.95, NS $17.25, BC, AB, SK, MB, QC, $15.75, PE $17.10. WMS members are asked to send subscriptions through their group *Glad Tidings* Secretary. Individual subscribers may order direct from *Glad Tidings*. Please make all cheques and money orders payable at par to *Glad Tidings*.

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to the circulation department at 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, Ontario M3C 1J7. Phone 416-441-1111; 800-619-7301.
E-mail gladtidings@presbyterian.ca. ISSN: 00170720.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund (CPF) for our publishing activities.

I have been haunted by a conversation I had recently at a barber shop in my community, while waiting for my 9-year-old son to have his hair cut. We are there quite a bit because both my husband and son get their hair cut there, and even my daughter. Our son's barber asked what else we had on this weekend. I said hockey and church. He said, "You go to church?" I responded, "Yes." He said he used to go to church, but on one Sunday they suggested he had to give 10% to the church, and he was so turned off he never went back.

I wish I could say that the conversation continued in a meaningful way. That I had talked about the joy of being a Christian. About how much my faith, and living it with the support of the church, makes life better. However, I was caught off guard, and didn't have a good next line.

So, now my prayer is that there will be other opportunities to share some of this in conversations with my son's barber. Perhaps, in the future, we can encourage him to give it another try. Who knows—other than God of course? Perhaps, some day he will even see giving as an opportunity, a joy, maybe even striving for or surpassing a 10% number.

As Christmas approaches, I think the opportunities to talk about our faith increase too. I know in our increasingly secularized world, we are sometimes nervous about offending others, or we get so forceful about our faith, that we turn others off. But what if this Christmas, we slow down prior to Christmas and take the time to share our faith stories with others.

What if this Christmas, we don't rush into all our Christmas preparations, but slow down. Perhaps in our slow times of waiting and prayer throughout Advent, we will be more aware of these opportunities. Perhaps, as others see a peace in us, they will ask us how we are calm in this busy season. Perhaps, we can work with our church to provide a calmness to Advent, that allows others to come and wait with us. This year, maybe allow yourself to not do everything you usually do for Christmas, but allow yourself to slow down and be at peace.

I pray that on this Christmas you will be at peace as you celebrate the birth of the Messiah!

Hit Pause!

by Patricia Anne Elford

What do the following experiences share?

- As they fidget in their seats, the lights finally dim, the curtains swish back to reveal …
- Through the kitchen door drifts warm smells of cinnamon and melted butter. He drools.
- Somewhere in the marsh, that bird is singing. Its unique call tugs them towards a dogwood.
- He gently strokes her cheek, lifts her soft lips towards his.
- Slowly, a sliver of blackness edges the upper left side of the moon. Eclipse is coming.
- Her fingers stumble through the unwrapping. The ribbons and paper resist her eagerness.

In each instance, there is delicious anticipation, awaiting or seeking something very special.

When my brother and I were children, we would create Advent calendars by hanging a homemade chain of colourful paper links fastened to the bottom of a sparkly Christmas card pinned up by our beds. Each morning, upon arising, we'd snip off one link until the card, with one link only, announced that Christmas was on the next day! No candies were involved. That idea had not been introduced so no such expectation existed.

I also remember the anticipation of waiting to open our stockings. After Christmas Eve service, sometime during the l-o-n-g Christmas night, the limp lisle stocking spread at the foot of our bed changed. A tentative toe-wiggling in early-morning darkness would indicate that a stocking made lumpy and whispering by its unknown contents lay in place. We did not open it.

We were to wait. Wait we did. We would repeatedly wiggle our toes to feel the stocking's heaviness and hear the rustles, to reassure ourselves our treats were there. We would imagine what this lump or that might be, but we would never open the stocking's contents until it was time—time to thump onto our parents' bed to share that noisy, joyful experience with them and with each other. The waiting. The anticipation. Then, the great joy of fulfillment.

These days, we seem to rush into seasons. When pumpkins and witches clutter store shelves, even crowd some front porches, we know it must be Thanksgiving. Now, when Christmas carols and songs beat on our ears, and this year's newest flavour of toys cram the aisles, we know it must be Hallowe'en! By the time Christmas arrives, we've been "Christmassed" out. Be honest, by then, what most of us are anticipating is a chance to rest our ears, minds, and bodies from the long-term "Christmas" attacks. Our souls have been assaulted.

In these days of sound bites, tweets and twitters, microwave meals, reduced attention spans, and immediate gratification that no longer gratifies, there seems to be little patience with waiting. A whole aspect of fulfillment is lost.

The compilers of the Revised Common Lectionary calendar understood the need for waiting, for preparation. We often read, "Put Christ back into Christmas." Christ has never left Christmas. *We* have, and it starts with the misuse of Advent, the preparation time, the waiting-for-the-coming time.

Though the Bible does not command the church's recognition of the Christian/liturgical year, this interdenominational practice has proved to have much value. There is a framework, a rhythm and continuity, a fullness and growing in church life.

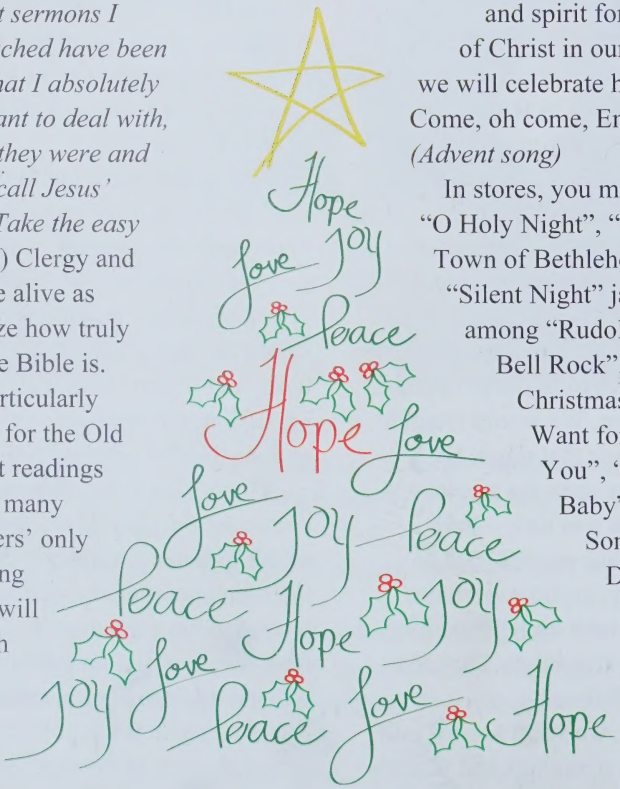
True, some Biblical texts are not included, even in the three-year cycle,

but following the church year, themes in Scripture, music, and all those interrelated portions of the worship, provides a structure that helps to prevent repeatedly singing the same life-deprived songs or preaching the same too-comfortable messages in different clothing.

It encourages delving into the Scriptural richness and background that is there. *(Some of the best sermons I have preached have been on texts that I absolutely did not want to deal with, but there they were and I don't recall Jesus' saying, "Take the easy way out.")* Clergy and laity come alive as they realize how truly vibrant the Bible is. That is particularly important for the Old Testament readings for which many worshippers' only illuminating exposure will be through sermons.

The Advent Old Testament readings, the scriptures being read before and during Jesus' earthly time, speak of trials, of waiting and anticipating the Messiah's arrival. As we worship each Sunday, lighting a blue or purple candle on the Advent wreath to mark the specific Advent week, we *deliberately* try to share that long pre-Christmas trial with God's people of long ago. We are preparing in mind, body and spirit for the renewal of Christ in our lives when we will celebrate his birth. "O Come, oh come, Emmanuel." *(Advent song)*

ADVENT: YES. CHRISTMAS: NOT YET.



In stores, you may hear "O Holy Night", "Oh Little Town of Bethlehem", or "Silent Night" jammed in among "Rudolph", "Jingle Bell Rock", "White Christmas", "All I Want for Christmas is You", "Dear Santa Baby", "Chipmunk Song", "Bob and Doug's Twelve Days of Christmas", "I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa

Claus", "Here Comes Santa Claus" — Christian and secular music, intended to open your wallet, to push your buying into high gear and keep you sweet-tempered in the line-ups.

In the church, it is meant to be a different story. There, you are eagerly awaiting the promised One's arrival. Advent: yes. Christmas: not yet. This means no Joseph and Mary and Baby Jesus in the crèche scene until Christmas Eve/Day, no magi until even later. *(It's Biblical—honest.)*

This means no actual Christmas carols and hymns until the church's Christmas season, which begins on Christmas Sunday and actually lasts for several Sundays. Some congregations put up the Christmas tree late in Advent for practical reasons, but leave the lights off until Christmas Eve, recognizing the Church year's Advent in that way.

People who can't control their desire to sing Christmas carols and hymns in church before Christmas Season often join a choir or worship leadership group. In this way, they gain the legitimate pleasure of practising the music in advance. Their efforts help to provide an opportunity for *other* worshippers to have the fully meaningful four Sundays of Advent *and* the three Christmas season Sundays which follow.

Full Disclosure: I, myself, am guilty of the jump-the-gun secret pleasure of playing certain mixed Advent and Christmas CDs at home as I address cards *(a shorter process now)* and wrap presents.

Others who can't control that desire have a pre-service or evening Christmas hymn-sing a week before Christmas, recognizing that many members will be in other communities with family on Christmas Eve and Day, unable to be with the their home church. But, though the flames of hell will not automatically envelop the church members who cannot abstain, those members *will* lose out on the ancient and modern tradition's intention and effect.

What is that effect? We're intended to be experiencing the longing and the anticipation that God's long-suffering people were enduring before Jesus's birth. Psalm 13:1, sums up the Advent mood well: "How long, O Lord?" Will you forget me forever?" (NRSV) For them, of course, it was much longer than a measly four week.) Having lived through that l-o-n-g waiting for the coming, then not a diluted, but a hardy Christmas is truly welcomed … that much sweeter and more joyous.

We are not the shopping mall. We are the church. If your congregation has not yet experienced a faithful following of the lectionary, I would strongly encourage you to do so. In your own life, celebrate Advent as well, as you slow down and wait for Christmas. Advent is coming.

READY! SET! WAIT!

by Colleen Wood

Welcome the Child

(and their Parents)

Several years ago, a very involved mom in our congregation at the time, was concerned about Christmas Eve worship with her children. It was hard. Although there were already two services, the early service was still at 7:30 p.m., making it a late night for her children. It was a lovely service, and was packed, but often her children would fall asleep during worship. Then, there was the challenge of getting them home and settled again on this exciting night.

So, she did something about it. With the approval of the session and the minister, another service was added. This truly was an early service, to be held late afternoon on Christmas Eve. It would be aimed at families with young children, but of course all would be welcome. It would also provide an opportunity for those in the community to bring out their young children.

It was a success. Although the sanctuary was not packed, a good number showed up to worship together. Yes, there were many children, but there were lots of adults too. Some of the older members appreciated an earlier service so they didn't have to go out after dark. Others appreciated the timing because of family commitments. A few attended from other churches that did not have an early service.

There are lots of great reasons for adding an extra service to our Christmas Eve, but it can be a challenge to take on one more commitment during a very busy time

So, here are some suggestions for

reaching out to the young families in your congregation and your community.

Keep it short. Children do not have a long attention span, so 30-45 minutes is ample enough.

Don't immediately go to the usual leadership. Your minister might be reluctant to take on another service if they are already leading one, two, even three services on Christmas Eve. So, consider what alternatives there might be to having your minister lead the teaching time.

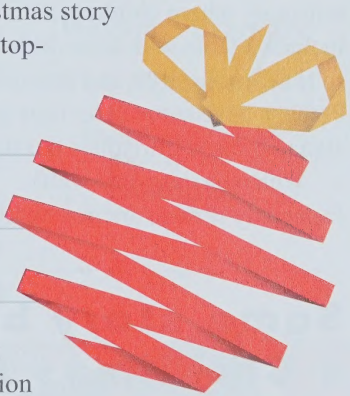
First, consider not having a sermon. There are many great children's books that can be read during the learning time instead and these are great for inter-generational services.

Perhaps re-tell the Christmas story from the Bible (using a children's Bible or simple translation) and invite the children (and adults) to come forward and 'act' out the parts. You can provide simple costumes to make it more fun—tinsel for the angels, some ears on headbands for the sheep, and some cloaks. Your congregation likely already has a good collection of 'Christmas' costumes and props.

Another great way to tell the story is using Young Children in Worship resources.

You could even show a video that tells the Christmas story, but again, keep it short and check out copyright laws. Last year my son put together a Christmas story using stop-motion animation and our Little People nativity set. Perhaps there are some youth in your congregation, who could contribute to the service in this way.

Remember your choir and music director might not be able to take on another service. Look for someone in your congregation, who can perhaps play the guitar or piano for this service. Choose simple and familiar Christmas carols. Perhaps have a young person give a solo if you want special music.



Yes, there were many children, but there were lots of adults too.

So, she did something about it.

Provide worship bags for the children when they arrive. A large plastic bag is perfect for this. Include some crayons, Christmas colouring sheets, Christmas stickers, and perhaps a small healthy snack (just be careful about food allergies). Perhaps you can even include a small book that shares the Christmas story.

If possible, set up a space in your sanctuary where children can move. Include a table with some little chairs so little ones can sit and colour. Perhaps have some quiet toys in this area and some Christmas puzzles.

Welcome everyone well! Especially if there are new families, take extra time to welcome them on their arrival. Tell them the important things, such as where the bathrooms are, where a change table is available, etc. At the beginning of worship, again welcome everyone and let them know, children, are welcome, even if they are restless or loud—as this time is for them.

Think about safety. Lots of Christmas Eve services include candles. If you choose to light Advent candles at this service, be certain they are secure and not in a place where families are likely to walk, or consider switching to electric candles for this service. Many churches often like to

Some story book suggestions for a Christmas Eve service

Christmas Lizard **by Cory Edwards**
Although this book is out of print, you may be able to get it from a friend or a local library. It tells a lovely story about a pet iguana who learns the true meaning of Christmas as he explores the families Christmas tree.

The Stable that Bob Built **by Cindy Kenney**
This is one of our family favourites and is a great and silly Christmas story for Veggie Tale fans. You could encourage the children to moo along with the cows in this story and to repeat the last line along with you on each page.

The Berenstain Bears Christmas Tree **by Jan and Mike Berenstain**
A funny tale of Father Bear learning the true meaning of Christmas as he searches for his perfect Christmas tree.

A Charlie Brown Christmas **by Charles M. Schulz**
This book is a classic that always reminds us what Christmas is all about.

light candles during the last song of their Christmas Eve services. A fun option that can be used for this service would be glow sticks! Children are then able to take the light of Christ with them as they leave.

Perhaps, host Messy Church on Christmas Eve which will allow families to truly interact around the Christmas story. Close your Messy Church with a short worship time together. However, if you are planning Messy Church, remember that even this should be short since families will be quite busy.

Welcome everyone **WELL!** Espeically if there are **NEW FAMILIES**...

***Mortimer's Christmas Manger* by Karma Wilson**

This is a lovely story about a mouse named Mortimer who looks for a bed and finds himself sleeping in the family's nativity set.

***Humphrey's First Christmas* by Carol Heyer**

This is the story of a camel, Humphrey, who travels with the wise men to see the Christ child. It is a lovely story of grace as it shares the Christmas story through the eyes of this unhappy camel.

This Year I Put God on the Christmas List

by Carol Penner, *carolpenner.typepad.com/leadinginworship*

It never occurred to me till this year to put God on my Christmas list. Heaven knows, I've been on the receiving end too many times to count, with a God whose giving knows no ending. Maybe God would like a gift, for a change.

What do you get Someone who has everything?
Slippers? Does one size truly fit all?
A book? What hasn't God read yet?
An ipad? Are there apps made in heaven?
Can everyone really use socks?
Tickets to a show … theatre? sports?
Is God hopeful enough to be a Maple Leafs fan?

Maybe I should get God something more personal. A home-made gift perhaps, like a coupon book. What God might really like is a coupon that says, "One minute of world peace."

I wish we could send messengers to God, holy angels singing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will from all people."

This Christmas, a present for God seems out of reach.

If I can't get a present, maybe I can be a present, by being present for God. This minute, this hour as my present. I will completely turn my attention to God; tuning in instead of tuning out, deciding to be an active listener.

I will take the Bible at its word and believe that God wants to hear from me.

I will present my requests to God humbly, gratefully, honestly.

It's not wrapped in shiny paper. It's not a perfect gift for the Father of Lights; but I will try to be a cheerful giver.

Here's hoping that God will say, "This is just what I've always wanted!"

Christmas Celebration at Ghanaian Presbyterian Church, Toronto

by Cynthia Breman

Christmas at the Ghanaian Presbyterian Church is a joyous occasion which expands over two weeks. It begins with the service of nine lessons and carols, which is held two weeks prior to Christmas. The major groups in the church are tasked with selecting a Bible passage, which refers to the birth of Christ. At the service, a member from the group is expected to read the passage and to explain a little bit of its significance to the birth and mission of Jesus. After that, members of that group are expected to sing a Christmas carol which relates to the topic. At the end of the service, the resident pastor gives a summary of the passages and ends the service with a prayer.

During this two-week period, Bible studies are held Wednesdays and Fridays. We also throw a Christmas party for the children at this time, but we are certain that the real meaning of Christmas is not lost in the festivities. Therefore, this is impressed on the children throughout the celebration. Christmas Day church service is special because the various church groups wear their colorful attire and the service is graced with songs of praise and dancing.

A tradition that we have maintained since we started our church is for the Women's Fellowship to pay a "surprise" visit to the pastor, bringing along gifts which may

continued on page 32

2015 Tumekutana

by Sarah Kim and Janet Brewer

Women from 22 African Countries gathered.

It was hot and humid, but nobody seemed to mind. All the women gathered there were just glad of the opportunity to come together. They came from all over Africa, 22 countries in total, plus a few women from the PCUSA, Church of Scotland, and us (Janet Brewer and Sarah Kim) from the Women's Missionary Society.

The conference was called Tumekutana which is a Swahili word meaning "We have come together". Envisioned by Caryl Weinberg, a former PCUSA missionary, this conference started in 2007 with the objective of bringing together Presbyterian and Reformed Church women of Africa to discuss common concerns and issues. This was the third Tumekutana meeting: 2007 in Nairobi, Kenya; 2011 in Rwanda; 2014 postponed to 2015 because of the Ebola outbreak, in Ghana.

It began with a festive opening ceremony on Sunday, September 20, 2015, at the Abokobi Presbyterian Women's Centre near Accra, Ghana. Dignitaries from both the Presbyterian Church of Ghana and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana were invited to attend and speak. The delegates dressed in their colourful national costumes, processed into the conference hall with much joy and jubilation, dancing and singing, in celebration of coming together to this very important event.

The theme was Freedom in Christ: From Slavery to Empowerment. Throughout the conference, the topic of slavery and the need for empowering women came up again and again. How appropriate and relevant this was for the women of Africa!

Monday, a day trip was planned to visit Elmina Castle where the

slave trade took place for many centuries. (See separate section) We were shown how slavery took place over 500 years ago, with ships departing from the harbor at Elmina Castle (near Accra, Ghana). At the height of the slave trade, over 1000 men and women from different parts of Africa were shipped off every year to different parts of the world, forcibly and violently. According to Wikipedia, "current estimates are that about 12 million Africans were shipped across the Atlantic, although the number purchased by the traders is considerably higher."

Sadly, in Africa today, we see that the women (and children) are enslaved in different forms and shapes. Oppression and injustices, both subtle and obvious, are evident in the churches as well as in African society. At our conference, we heard from the women and were able to get a glimpse of their struggles.

One morning, we had a special prayer time with everyone holding hands in a huge circle. It was a time to bring the prayer requests of one's country so that the whole group could pray for you. It was a very moving time. I personally felt overwhelmed by the sheer darkness of the many prayer requests coming forward from the struggles of our African sisters—starting with the problem of Boko Haram in Nigeria; young children being sold to trafficking because of poverty; forced marriage of young girls (as young as age 9) to older men (60 plus) because their families were poor; sheer poverty in Malawi, DPR of Congo, Cameroon, and others; widow's rights (or lack of); wife abuse; patriarchal domination; and more.

Human trafficking is happening in many African countries. Because of the extreme poverty in many of these

countries, children and women are being sold off for economic reasons. Families sell off their children for money, often thinking their child is doing well, but in fact they are being abused and used. Sometimes young girls are sold off but the parents would not be aware that it is for the sex trade.

Widows are powerless. When their husbands die, they are left with hardly anything. Most of their properties go to their children and the husband's family. The situation is even worse for ministers' wives who are widowed. After years of serving the church (with no pay) with their husband they are given no compensation and kicked out of the manse within 6 months after their husband's death.

Women in general are powerless. Young girls, even as young as 9 years of age, are forcibly married off to older men, typically over 60 years, for financial security. These men take care of these young girls as their wives and eventually want them to become pregnant, even as young as 12 years of age.

In Nigeria, Boko Haram is still a real concern.

Many countries, in particular, Malawi and the Democratic Republic of Congo, asked for prayers because of the extreme poverty in their countries.

At the end of the conference, a Testament was drawn up by a committee (including our own Janet Brewer). The Testament stated the issues of the gathered women, declared and made commitments so that the representatives would have something to take back to the communities of women in 22 African countries facing the same issues and show their own women that others on their continent would stand in solidarity with them. Although the Testament was only words it could be used as a powerful weapon to work against poverty, modern enslavement practices such as forced and early marriages, widowhood practices, and other issues these women face.

We stood and read the Testament as part of the closing ceremonies. The last line of this Testament is … "We call on Tumekutana women to act as agents of transformation by standing up against harmful cultural practices. By God's grace and our own efforts, Tumekutana 2015 doesn't stop here and today—this is where it starts!"

We have so much to learn from our Christian sisters in Africa: their faith, their fervent prayer life, their joyful praise, and all this, despite their difficult hardships. Though they suffer through injustices and oppression they praise God and live a life filled with prayer. Though they struggle to make ends meet because of poverty, they seek God and God's purpose in their lives.

They can teach us so much about faith and prayer, and how to praise God. They can teach us so much about where to find God in the most unusual places. They can teach us so much about God's grace and a life of thanksgiving, despite their circumstances! There is so much they can teach us.

But there is one thing that we can help them with, that is, their struggle to be empowered. They are marginalized and oppressed in their own societies which are strongly patriarchal in structure and value-systems. They cannot become empowered on their own. During a plenary lecture on how to become involved in politics, one woman stood up and said bluntly, "We are poor. How can we even think about getting into politics?" In another plenary lecture, another woman stood up and said, "We are poor. Where do we start and how do we become empowered?" They need our help so that they can help themselves once they are empowered.

Conclusion

When I was in high school, I read a book called *Cry the Beloved* ***Country***. It was a story about one family living under the apartheid system in South Africa. It was gripping and sad at the time. After attending Tumekutana, I felt like saying, "Cry the Beloved **Continent**". There is so much sadness, anger against injustices and horrific incidences happening. Through the cries of the grassroots women gathered, the pulse of Africa could be felt.

All human beings want to live in peace, live with enough to eat, have clean water, be able to raise their children with full opportunities for education and livelihood. Our African sisters are no different. But they face so many challenges which are like mountains standing in front of them.

Is there hope for the future? Yes, because women are strong. Empowering these women is the first step to empowering the children, the family, the country, and eventually the continent. A strong element of empowerment is knowing that others are walking with you in solidarity. This, we can all do, from anywhere in the world. They cannot do it alone. As Christians, we can stand in solidarity with our sisters in Africa.

Elmina (Slave) Castle, Ghana

by Janet Brewer

After the Tumekutana opening ceremonies on Sunday evening, the first day of the conference involved a field trip to Elmina. We travelled west along the coast for about 165 km from Accra where we visited the São Jorge (St. George) Castle or Elmina Castle. This was the final land destination for those captured in the surrounding region and bound for slavery in other countries—the point of no return.

Visiting Elmina Castle with a group of African women whose ancestors had been greatly affected by the awful trade of human beings was a very emotional experience, but one that kicked off the conference discussions "from slavery to freedom."

Our buses could not reach the castle parking lot and so we walked through the town of Elmina—through the market and amidst the fishermen—toward a large white-washed building that is currently a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The Portuguese were the first Europeans to come to Ghana in 1471. They came to trade goods for gold that was plentiful in this area and its surroundings (hence the name Gold Coast that you might remember from your geography classes), search for a new route to India and the Far East; and spread Christianity. A permanent Portuguese settlement and stronghold was established at the Elmina Castle site in 1482, after the land was legally

transferred to them. Normal trade continued until the early 1600s when the trans-Atlantic slave trade began. In 1637, the Dutch made a well-coordinated attack on the Portuguese and defeated them. Unfortunately, the Dutch continued the horrific slave-trade at Elmina Castle until 1814. In 1872, the British took over the Dutch lands in the western hemisphere and traded these for British lands in Indonesia and Sumatra. The slave-trade was no longer legal (and didn't continue at Elmina) but illegal trade (by the British) continued at the Cape Coast Castle about 12 km east of Elmina.

Elmina Castle was then used for many other purposes, including the training of men brought from English-speaking West Africa, who subsequently were sent to India and Burma to fight for the British during the Second World War. After the war, it was used as a police training school. Ghana gained its independence in 1957.

We had our own guide for our Tumekutana group. The stories we heard of the rounding up and herding of humans (men, women, and children) into this and other "castles" were very hard to believe. Men (and boys) and women (and girls) were separated when they reached the castle. Families were rarely together ever again and many people died. Food and water were restricted in order to weaken the slaves and prevent mutiny. People were jammed into close quarters of up to 400 women and 600 men. Personal space was non-existent. They were chained together in many instances and if the person to whom you were chained died it could be some time before you were released. They waited there

"The stories we heard of the rounding up and herding of humans (men, women, and children) into this and other "castles" were very hard to believe."

until the ships arrived to take them to further bondage on the ship and to the new faraway land.

The governor and solders lived in the castle, too. We were told that, as not many men had brought along their wives, the men chose women slaves, to rape in order to satisfy their sexual appetites. The governor would have the women brought out of their dungeons and paraded in the courtyard below his quarters. He would make his choice. The chosen woman would be cleaned up a bit, given some extra food for some energy and taken to the governor's chambers. She would be sent back to the dungeons once she had served her purpose. If a woman refused or rebelled in any way, she would be chained to a cannon ball in the courtyard and left without food and water. Many died in this fashion.

One wonders what would have been better—to die in the courtyard or live longer in the dungeons with sick and dying women in your own excrement, vomit, and menstrual blood.

When the time came to go out to the waiting ships, the prisoners were weak and could not give much resistance. The pathway of no return led them deeper into the dungeons—into narrower and lower passageways—and finally out by a small opening in the wall to the waiting boats. Once on the ship, they were chained in place in the most expedient and space-saving method for shipment for further slavery to the Americas and Caribbean.

When we stood in the lowest darkest dungeon, cramped and hot, for a moment of silence, one woman sang quietly "Lord, listen to your children praying." There were many tears!

On an interior wall of the castle, we saw this plaque ...

In everlasting memory of the anguish of our ancestors.

May those who died, rest in peace.

May those who return find their roots.

May humanity never again perpetuate such injustice against humanity.

We, the living, vow to uphold this.

Call to Prayer

by Colleen Wood

As the year draws to a close, I challenge you to take some additional time to pray for the world. You can use some, or all, of these prayers, but I also encourage you to purchase a newspaper, or visit a news site online, and add some more current prayers to complement these.

Syria

As we prepare to go to print, not a day goes by without an update on Syria. UNICEF has recently called Syria the most dangerous place for a child. The conflict in Syria is not new. *Glad Tidings* called you to pray for Syria in our March–April 2013 edition and we once again call for your prayers for Syria.

Photo: Paul Jeffrey

The Presbyterian Church is active in Syria. Presbyterian World Service & Development continues to provide food, shelter, clothing, and psychosocial, medical, and educational support to refugees and internally displaced people in Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan through ACT Alliance and Canadian Foodgrains Bank. As well, International Ministries' partners in the Middle East are training leaders and responding to the needs that are overwhelming the surrounding countries.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada also has a sponsorship agreement with Citizenship and Immigration Canada which enables Presbyterian congregation to welcome refugees to Canada. Interested congregations can contact PWS&D for more information.

Let us pray for Syria:

> God of the displaced, be with those who are fleeing or have fled Syria. We pray for all those that are looking for a safe place to live and thrive, and we pray for the many organizations which are working in this area.
>
> We pray that those who have left Syria will find safe haven, and we pray that peace may come to their homeland so that they may return some day. We also pray that you be with those who remain in Syria. Build them up, protect them, and give them hope.

Finally, we pray for Presbyterian congregations across Canada that are working to welcome refugees into their communities. May the process be efficient and may these congregations reach out with your love to those, who have travelled so far.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Canada's Aboriginal Peoples

Many Canadians are not aware of the history of residential schools, or how the effects of these schools continue to impact current generations and, in fact, the entire Aboriginal culture. For many generations, children were removed from their homes, taken to distant residential schools, and separated from their families, their communities, their culture, and their language. Because the children were no longer exposed to positive parenting role models, parenting skills weren't developed, and family connections disintegrated. "The fallout of this can be seen today in the form of low self-esteem, abuse, family violence, addictions, poor relationship and conflict resolution skills, high rates of single motherhood and teen pregnancy, mental health issues, lack of cultural knowledge, and a plethora of chronic health conditions."[1]

Clearly, residential schools are still affecting current generations of Aboriginal peoples. This year, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission released their final report in Ottawa. It consisted of 94 recommendations for moving forward, namely: reduce the number of Aboriginal children in care; ensure equal funding for the education of Aboriginal children; develop cultural educational curricula; acknowledge Aboriginal language rights; develop goals to close the gaps in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities; hold a public inquiry into the missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls; develop an annual "state of Aboriginal Peoples" report; develop age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples; and develop a National Residential School Student Death Registry.

Let us pray for our Aboriginal Brothers and Sisters:

Creator God,
We pray asking that you help each

Photo:S. Kendall

Presbyterian participants at the closing Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) event in Ottawa on May 31–June 3, 2015.

of us to be more aware of and compassionate about issues facing others in our own country. We especially pray for our Aboriginal brothers and sisters.

We remember the apology of The Presbyterian Church in Canada to our Aboriginal Peoples in 1994. We acknowledge the damage done by the Residential Schools and ask for forgiveness for the involvement of our church. We know that our church is working towards reconcilation and we pray for a future of healing and wholeness in our journey forward.

We pray for all those who work with our Aboriginal brothers and sisters and ask that you will give them strength and wisdom. Encourage them in their work.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Nepal

On April 25, 2015, a massive 7.8 magnitude earthquake—the worst the country had experienced in 81 years—struck Nepal. The death toll from this earthquake was over 8000, and many were injured. Then, just two weeks later, another earthquake hit. These earthquakes left many in fear, without adequate shelter, or access to food, water, or sanitation.

Let us pray for Nepal.

Loving God, we pray for those who were affected by the earthquakes in Nepal. We pray for those who lost

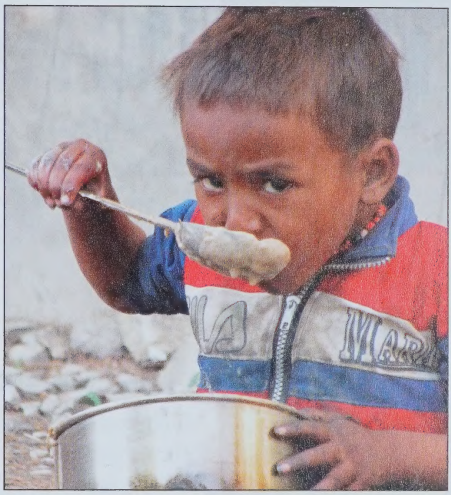


Photo: PWS&D

loved ones and ask that you comfort them.

We know, that even months later, many are without adequate shelter, and may be lacking in food, shelter, and sanitation services. We pray that soon those needs will be met. We pray for all those working in Nepal that they may know the best way to restore services to this area.

We also pray for the continued work of PWS&D in Nepal. May their important work in the Jumla Clinic continue as they improve the nutritional needs of the people, and combat ailments such as leprosy, tuberculosis, HIV and AIDS.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

---

[1] Health Council of Canada. Understanding and Improving Aboriginal Maternal and Child Health in Canada; Conversations about Promising Practices across Canada. 2011. P. 20.

Christmas Worship

by Rev. Heather Jones

Call to Worship: (based on Psalm 27:14

The psalmist says

I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord
in the land of the living.
Wait for the Lord;
be strong, and let you heart take courage;
wait for the Lord.

We gather here today, in this Advent season, to wait for the coming of the Christ child. Let us take this time away from our preparations and our anticipation to wait.

Opening Hymn: All earth is waiting (verses 1, 2), #109

Introduction:

Advent is a season of waiting.

In our culture, waiting is difficult. Some people might say that waiting is a waste of time, and there is not much in our society that is more valuable than time.

What is it about waiting that is so troublesome? Why is waiting so difficult for so many of us? In our society, we are accustomed to having control over just about everything. We value people who 'take control'. We manipulate our environment, our schedules, and our relationships so that we feel we are in control. But when we are waiting, we are not in control.

The problem is that when we are waiting, someone else must do something to end our wait. And that is

very difficult for us. We want to think of ourselves as strong—invincible. We don't want to think of ourselves as being at the mercy of someone else.

In these weeks before the celebration of the birth of Jesus, we are waiting. We know that God has come into our world, and we know that God will come into the world again, but for now, we wait. Let's take some time here, to wait, with the people of faith.

Read Matthew 1:18–23

Reflection:

In telling the story of the birth of Jesus, Matthew quotes the prophecy from Isaiah about the young woman who will conceive, and bear a son, who shall be called Emmanuel. The people of Israel waited for that son to be born, expecting that he would bring them hope and peace. Mary and Joseph also have their time of waiting. After being visited by the angel in his dream, Joseph took Mary as his wife, and waited for this son to be born.

We can imagine the hope, and probably the confusion he experienced as he waited. He was a righteous man. He wanted to believe, but it must have been difficult.

We know many people who have waited, wanting to believe, but confused by the information available. The experience of waiting for test results, either for ourselves or someone we love is much like Joseph's experience. We hope for the best. We want to believe that the lump is benign, or the exhaustion is only anemia, but we know how common cancer is.

This is waiting.

Read James 5:7–11

Reflection:

In his encouragement to have patience, James cites the common but profound situation of the farmer who waits for the rains that will bring life to the seeds that have

been sown. With all of the progress, and all of the innovation, and all of the technology we have in this world in the 21st century, we are not able to produce food without rain. Those who live in cities are distanced from this reality, but we are affected by the weather patterns of the world.

For those who live among farmers, the experience of waiting for rain is among the most nerve-wracking of situations. For farmers in the developing world, the importance of the rains coming, and being adequate, is even more significant. In northern Malawi, most families grow their own maize during the rainy season. The crops harvested in March and April must be enough to feed their families for the year ahead. If the rains are late, parents know that their family will be hungry before the harvest is ready. If the rains fail, they know that there will be hunger, disease, and death. And so, each year the farmers prepare the land, plant the seeds, and hope for the best.

This is waiting.

Read John 1:1–5

Reflection:

Advent is a season of waiting. We are waiting for the Saviour, for the light of Christ to come and bring us salvation. We are waiting: we are not in control. As we wait for the coming of the Christ, we have to give up our attempts to be in control. We have to realize that God is in control. God has not sent the darkness, the uncertainty, or the suffering of this life, but God is in control and God will win out. God sent the light into the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. Difficulties still exist, darkness is around us. But the light still shines, and the darkness has not overcome it. Christ will come.

Hope can overcome fear. If we wait intentionally, if we put our energy not into avoiding the waiting but into thinking and praying about what we are hoping for, then we are waiting hopefully. Hopeful waiting takes hold of the future and pulls it into the present. That is the waiting to which Advent calls us: waiting which longs for the reign of God in peace and justice; waiting which offers reconciliation and love; and waiting that longs for the realization of the integrity of the whole human family and all of creation.

As we celebrate Advent, let us wait. Let us acknowledge that God is in control; that God waits with us.

Litany of Intercession: (Based on Isaiah 12:2–6)

When preparing to lead this service, you are encouraged to add prayers for people or situations significant to your own community.

Leader: God is our salvation; we will trust, and will not be afraid,
for the Lord God is our strength and our salvation.

People: We give thanks to the Lord; we pray in the name of Jesus the Christ.

Leader: In this season of waiting, we pray for all who wait.

People: We give thanks to the Lord; we pray in the name of Jesus the Christ.

Leader: We pray for all who are waiting for diagnosis, or treatment, or healing.

People: We give thanks to the Lord; we pray in the name of Jesus the Christ.

We Prepare

Leader: We pray for the families of the hundreds of murdered or missing Aboriginal women in Canada, as they wait for news of their loved one.

People: We give thanks to the Lord; we pray in the name of Jesus the Christ.

Leader: We pray for the young people in our communities who wait for news about educational or career opportunities.

People: We give thanks to the Lord; we pray in the name of Jesus the Christ.

Leader: We pray for the leaders of our churches, our communities, and our country, as they wait for inspiration, wisdom, and guidance.

People: We give thanks to the Lord; we pray in the name of Jesus the Christ.

Leader: We pray for the poor, the oppressed, and the displaced, as they wait for justice.

People: We give thanks to the Lord; we pray in the name of Jesus the Christ.

All: We pray, and we trust, and we will not be afraid. The Lord God is our strength and our salvation. Amen

Closing:

As we go from this place, let us commit to waiting, in hope, in peace, in joy, and in love for the coming of the Christ. May our celebrations of the birth of Jesus be enriched by the depth of our understanding of his life and his witness to the saving, healing, and redeeming love of God.

Closing hymn: Come, thou long-expected Jesus, #110

2015: The Year of the Gift Annuity

provisionaries
Planting seeds of hope.
For generations to come.

Felicity Alexander

A Presbyterian annuitant who has good reasons to celebrate

"Some years ago I attended a couple of Planned Giving seminars and, after discussions with my son—who is a CA and a Chartered Financial Analyst—I decided that a gift annuity would allow me to leave something to my church when I die, but still enjoy the benefit of income from the money while I am alive. So that's like having my cake and eating it, too. Here's what happened...

"In January 2010, I wrote a cheque for $20,000 to the Trustee Board of The Presbyterian Church in Canada and got an immediate charitable donation receipt for $5,600. I receive $1,070 in income from the annuity every year, and, thanks to the CRA, the taxable portion of that annual amount is so small that there's nothing to pay. It's a win-win situation!"

The above words are adapted from a presentation Felicity Alexander made to her home congregation, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, in Brampton, Ontario, on the benefits of gift annuities for both donors and the church.

To learn how you can have your cake and it too, contact Sheryl in the Stewardship & Planned Giving Department for a free, no-obligation gift annuity quote.

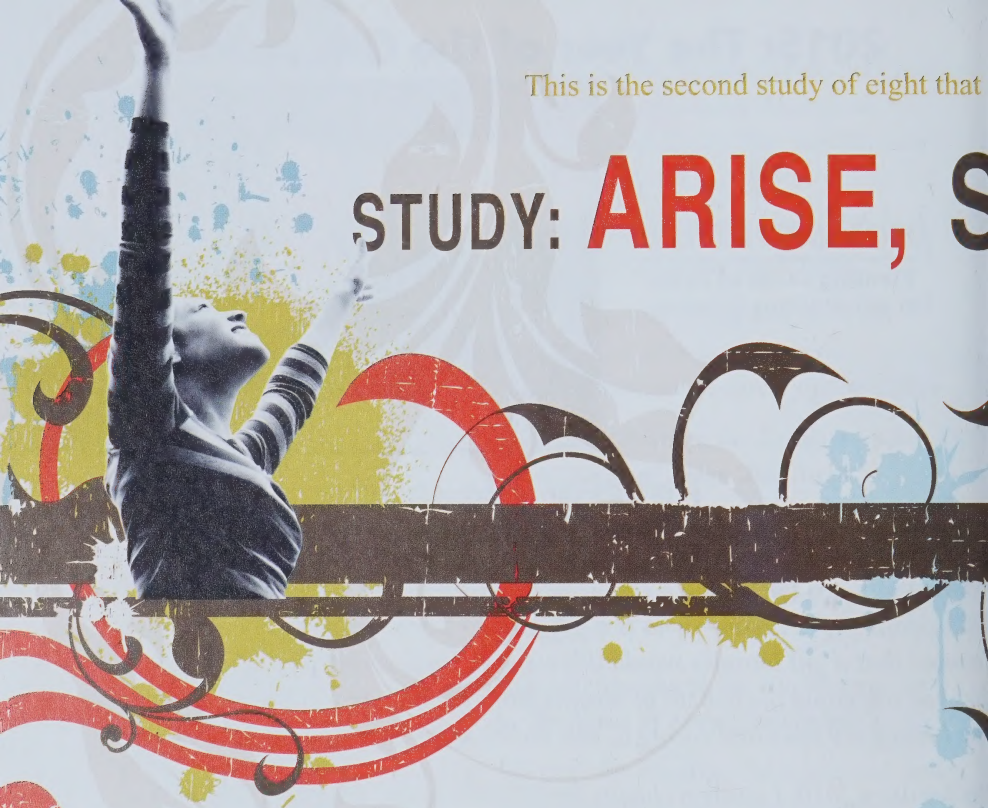
What will your legacy be?

The Presbyterian Church in Canada
50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, ON M3C 1J7
ssutton@presbyterian.ca • 1-800-619-7301 ext. 265
presbyterian.ca/pg

The above example is for illustrative purposes only. Gift annuity rates are subject to change.

This is the second study of eight that

STUDY: ARISE, S



Opening Prayer

Pray for the safety of sex-trafficking victims and individuals involved in the sex-trade.

Loving God, be present with sex-trafficking victims and individuals involved in the sex-trade. Shield them from harm, protect them from danger, and hold them safely in the palm of your hands. We pray this all in Jesus' name. Amen.

Introduction

Samantha's[i] parents had a tumultuous relationship and divorced when she was quite young. Her mother remarried when she was 10-years-old. Her stepfather seemed nice and charming. He wanted Samantha to call him "Daddy," and always complimented her on her appearance.

Late one night, her stepfather stumbled into her room, drunk, and molested Samantha. She started to cry and scream, but he held his hand over her mouth

nned over the next two year on women.

x-trafficking

by Rev. Deb Rapport

trying to quiet her. The next morning, her stepfather acted as though nothing had happened. Over the following months, he would look for reasons to be alone with Samantha and the abuse would continue.

Samantha's grades declined, she began to self-harm, and after a pregnancy scare she was sent to live with her aunt and uncle. Her cousins did not like having to share their parents' attention with Samantha and she was frequently bullied. She moved into a bedroom in the basement to create the separation. The basement's dark corners hid her stepfather's continued abuse and served as an easy access for a number of her uncle's friends.

The adults in her life had failed to protect her and at 13-years-old, Samantha decided to runaway. She convinced a friend to go to Toronto with her, but after a couple hours her friend got scared and took a bus back to the suburbs. Samantha was on her own, hungry, scared, and not knowing where to go. She sat down on the sidewalk and attempted to beg for change.

A man and woman walked by. They were wearing brand-name clothes and walking like they owned the block. Everyone seemed to know them and

Samantha watched captivated by what she saw. A short while later, the man came back and said there was a way for her to make more money than she could ever imagine. He offered her shelter, food, and clothes, so she went with him.

When he brought her to his hotel room, she met several other girls her age with similar experiences. At a fancy hotel, with friends her age that understood her, Samantha thought she had finally found her place in the world. She did not realize at the time, how wrong she was. For the next three years, she was part of a child sex-trafficking ring. She was moved to a different city or hotel every few days. Samantha was forced to serve over 50 clients a week and if she didn't she was threatened and beaten.

On a trip back to Toronto, she caught a glimpse out the front window and recognized where they were; this was the exit for her hometown. All Samantha wanted was to go to her grandmother's house for Christmas. She began pleading with her traffickers and tried to open the passenger door. When that failed, she tried the windows and began kicking at the glass. The driver's swerving and speeding, in an attempt to deter Samantha, succeeded in attracting the police. When the car was pulled over, the police quickly realized they had busted a child sex-trafficking ring.

Biblical Reflection

Read Rahab's story as found in Joshua 2:1–24 and Joshua 6:15–26

How is Rahab described in this story?

What is said or implied about her based on her actions?

God could have led the spies to any house in Jericho, why did God choose Rahab?

How are the promises made, fulfilled for Rahab?

What might this imply for us today?

This is sex-trafficking[ii]

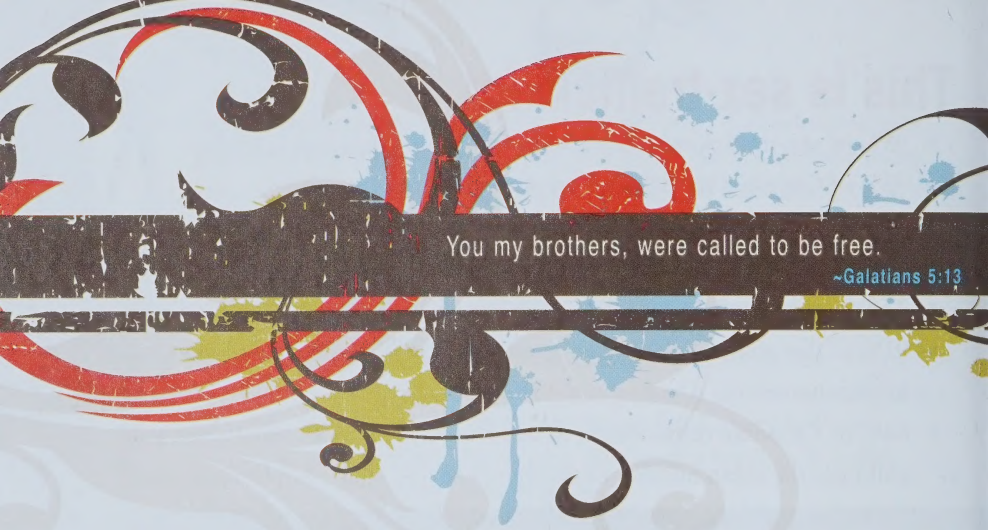
- 98% of sex-trafficking victims worldwide are women and children.
- 93% of Canada's trafficking victims come from Canada.
- The most common recruitment age in Canada is 13–14-years-old.
- The worldwide profits from sex-trafficking is $99 billion (US).
- The average annual profit from each female trafficked in Canada is $280,000
- 91% of the sex-trafficked girls, in one study,[iii] experienced childhood abuse in their homes.
- 84% of Canadian respondents, in one study,[iv] had been sexually abused as children; the mean number of childhood sexual abuse perpetrators was five.

What Our Church is Doing

ARISE Ministry is a mission of the Presbytery of East Toronto which offers hope to sex-trafficking victims and sexually exploited people through a ministry of outreach, case management, and pastoral care.

ARISE collaborates with Salvation Army Corps 614 and Yonge Street Mission to offer street-level outreach to women involved in the sex-trade in Toronto. In anticipation of the 2015 Toronto Pan-Am Games and the rise in the sex-trade activity associated with large sporting events, ARISE co-ordinated with its outreach partners to offer increased outreach during the Games. Through collaboration with Salvation Army Corps 614 and Yonge Street Mission, help of volunteers, and the generous support of many congregations and individuals, outreach was offered every night during the 2015 Toronto Pan-Am Games. Together, during the Games we gave out 320 outreach bags, many bottles of water, and packages of gum. Outreach is more than giving out supplies, these numbers point to a deeper reality of the conversations had, kindness shown, and hope kindled.

ARISE offers a case management program, which provides one-on-one support to women seeking to exit the sex-trade. The case management program is client-centred and goal-oriented. Participants identify their long-term goals, set weekly goals each week towards meeting these goals, and receive support in the achievement of these goals. Weekly case management meetings consist of discussion and reflection on a variety of life skills, goal setting, and pastoral care.



Ashley[v] and I have an ongoing outreach relationship. She always asks about a former colleague of mine and frequently requests that we remember her in our prayers. We have been present with her through her struggles with abusive men, addiction, and street-life. We have helped her get to detox and safety, and talked about the sense of failure she feels in each relapse.

Walking towards Ashley one outreach night, we could see that she was talking to a male customer. She asked if we could come back later because she really did want to talk. We were about 20 meters away when she called back, "Deborah, I'm sorry. Can you come back? You're worth more to me than him right now."

It was a bold statement of affirmation and of hope. She talked about her desperate need for change and her hope that this time would be different. Then she said, "You're doing some revolutionary work and I need to be part of it." ARISE is giving hope and changing lives.

By God's grace and through the generous support of *Presbyterians Sharing*, the Women's Missionary Society, the Edwards Charitable Foundation, the Presbytery of East Toronto, and many congregations, groups, and individuals, HOPE LIVES HERE!

To Think About:

Abuse and exploitation often occur before someone becomes a victim of sex-trafficking. Adverse childhood experiences place individuals at increased risk for a variety of concerns, including being vulnerable to recruitment by traffickers. Prevention involves us all.

- What ways are you helping at-risk and vulnerable children and youth?
- What programs, mission, or outreach does your church offer vulnerable and at-risk children and youth?
- How can you reach out to at-risk children and youth in your community?
- How can your church strengthen the sense of belonging that children and youth feel?
- What ways have your perceptions of sex-trafficking in Canada been challenged by this study, and how can you share what you've learned?

Additional Activities

Watch the documentary, *Nefarious: Merchant of Souls* (Available for rent/purchase: http://nefariousdocumentary.com/).

Share what you learned from the documentary about global sex-trafficking. Compare what you learned with assumptions you had and/or commonly held cultural perceptions.

Encourage your church or community to use The Presbyterian Church in Canada's "Presbyterians are talking about …" on Human Trafficking. (http://presbyterian.ca/talking-about/)

Pimps and Traffickers:

Sex-trafficking involves the control, coercion, and manipulation of an individual for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Pimps and traffickers are understood as being the same.

Pimps and traffickers utilize different tactics in recruiting and maintaining control; these tactics are differentiated as either finesse pimping or guerrilla pimping.

Finesse pimping is when someone is manipulated into situations where they seemingly make their own decisions to enter, sell sexual services, and give their money to a trafficker. Finesse pimping techniques include the following: put victims into situations in which they feel obligated to pay back kindness shown to them; use bait and switch techniques that serve to exploit the dreams of victims; and utilize victims' attempts to provide for their own basic needs.[iv]

Guerrilla pimping is recruitment by force. A trafficker will approach and force a victim to work through the use of threat, physical violence, and intimidation.[iiv]

In my anguish I cried to the Lord, and he answered by setting me free.

~ Psalm 118: 5

Closing Prayer

Let us pray today for those in bondage and exploited through human trafficking around the world. We pray for God's wondrous love to liberate, redeem, and emancipate.

Liberator, Redeemer, Emancipator
(These terms roll easily off our lips.)

For your power that notices,
Your passion that descends,
Your freedom that liberates,
We thank you.

We hold in your presence all those bondaged:
in fear and despair
victims of abuse, victims of human trafficking, women and children who need protection.
Let your wondrous love arise.

We hold in your presence all those bondaged:
in helplessness and hopelessness,
those stuck in a cycle of addiction, those who treat mental health concerns through self-medication, those who contemplate ending it all.
Let your wondrous love arise.

We hold in your presence all those bondaged:
in poverty and weariness,
those who slept in shelters last night, those who slept on the streets, those who do not know where their next meal will come from.
Let your wondrous love arise.

We hold in your presence all those bondage:
in crime, war, and violence
Let your wondrous love arise.

We hold in your presence all those bondaged:
in narcissism and self-indulgence,
in busy-ness and stuckness,
in bitterness and blindness,
Let your wondrous love arise.

In Canada, human trafficking was not a criminal offence until 2015.

Work your wonders among us:
in your strength like a hurricane,
in your gentleness like nursing,
in your abiding love like forever.

Work your wonders,
we pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.[viii]

---

[i] Names and various details have been changed to protect identity.

[ii] "From Heartbreaking to Groundbreaking: Stories and Strategies to end sex-trafficking in Canada." Canadian Women's Foundation, Fall 2014

[iii] "Domestic Minor Sex-trafficking: A Network of Underground Players in the Midwest." Celia Williamson and Michael Prior, 2009

[iv] "Prostitution and Trafficking in Nine Countries: An Update on Violence and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder." Melissa Farley et al., 2003

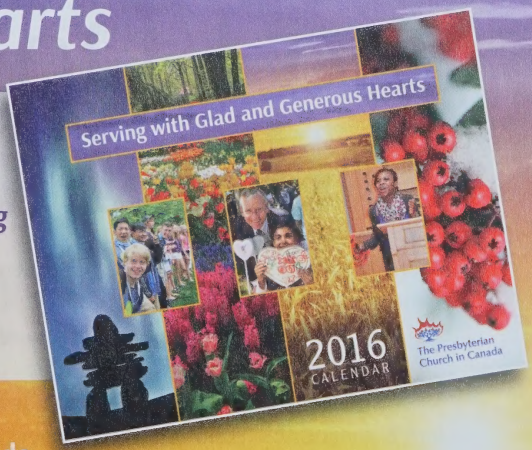
[v] Name changed to protect identity.

[vi] "Domestic Minor Sex-trafficking: A Network of Underground Players in the Midwest." Celia Williamson and Michael Prior, 2009, 50

[vii] "Domestic Minor Sex-trafficking: A Network of Underground Players in the Midwest." Celia Williamson and Michael Prior, 2009, 51

[viii] Adapted by Rev. Deb Rapport from *Awed to Heaven, Rooted in Earth: Prayers of Walter Brueggemann*, 2003.

Serving with Glad and Generous Hearts



Purchase the PCC 2016 Wall Calendar in bulk for

- *Elders to distribute while visiting*
- *Congregational or youth fundraising projects*
- *Gifts for visitors or speakers*

Order from the Resource Centre, The Presbyterian Church in Canada

resources@presbyterian.ca • 1-800-619-7301

Did I Do the Right Thi

by Victoria Stirling

When you truly love someone, are married or in a close partnership, there are few of us who want to admit we are unable to care for our loved one anymore? However, like me, they may finally have to face the reality unless they find alternate living arrangements for the person needing care or their own health will be compromised and this is not good for either one of them. It is one of the most difficult life decisions a lot of partners face; I know because it's one

I was forced to make.

I dreaded November 18, 2014. That was the scheduled day to place my 93-year-old husband in a long-term-care home. I was fearful my elderly husband, suffering with dementia and several physical ailments, would create a terrible fuss. I was fortunate to have the wonderful support of a close friend and also our adult grandson, who both assisted me with the move.

When we arrived at the facility, our grandson took my husband gently by the arm as he guided him into the home. We were met in the foyer by a staff member who escorted us up to his assigned floor, and then into a semi-private room.

"Harvey smiled as he looked around and appeared to like what he saw; he even said, "This is nice." He was warmly greeted by more staff members as they busied about getting him admitted, and he was affable and cheerful. Because of my earlier fears I was astonished, as well as relieved at how well all of it was going.

My grandson and I were invited to stay and have lunch in the dining hall with him. It was reassuring to see this was a brightly lit area with tables pleasantly laid. The meal had been prepared in the homes' own kitchen and it was good and enjoyed by all of us. After his noon meal, we returned to his room and as my husband wanted to take his usual afternoon nap, we told him we loved him, would see him again soon, and left.

Yet, as we drove away from the home that day, part of me remained there with him. The feeling of guilt that I had somehow let him down continued to be a personal burden during most of the seven months he lived in the long-term-care home. Even though I really knew I could not manage him at home, the guilt was still always there.

However, since July 6, 2015, when my beloved husband passed peacefully away, with quiet dignity and pain free, I've learned he did have quality time in that facility.

In many staff's condolences since, I've read as well as heard of the effect my husband had on them. He had enjoyed a unique camaraderie I hadn't been aware of with other residents, some relatives of residents, and those special staff members.

Harvey had participated in recreational activities; among them was the twice monthly happy hour which I know, having gone with him, was one of his favourites. While he was able, he would do some walking in the halls with Dan, a male physiotherapist. As they walked they

chatted, and Dan often told me how interesting he found my husband; especially on hearing about all the things he had achieved in his life: his 26 years in the Royal Navy, the many countries he had visited, and how he had met and married me.

When Harvey talked about his life in Scotland, it reminded some listeners of their own heritage. A resident at the home said how much she had enjoyed his company at the dining table they shared, and how she would miss him because he had always made her laugh.

This was not how his life had been for the previous two years. He had spent every day sitting, watching TV, just doing nothing. It didn't matter how much I tried to encourage him that there was more to life, he wouldn't budge.

So how do I feel now? Firstly, I am sad for myself as having been married to him for nearly 63 years, his life and mine are united; he'll always be a part of it. Still I've found much solace in learning about his experiences in the home. Just knowing the people he had come in contact with and who had shared in a part of the man I knew before dementia changed him. This has also erased some of the guilt I had carried all this time. I now know that I did do the right thing, for both of us. My prayer is that these words of mine may bring comfort, and be beneficial to anyone else going through a similar experience.

"My prayer is that these words of mine may bring comfort, and be beneficial to anyone else going through a similar experience."

---

continued from page 13

include groceries and toiletries. The Women's Fellowship also organizes the "Agape" feast to which various groups in the church are invited.

On the last Saturday of the month of December, the entire church comes together to eat lunch which usually consists of a variety of Ghanaian food.

The climax of these festivities is the joint church service on the 31st of December to usher in the New Year. At this service, Sister Protestant Ghanaian Churches in Toronto, notably the Ghanaian Anglican Church, the Methodist and SDA churches, are invited to join us for service. The church is always fully packed for this service and those who could not get in have to watch the service on big screen monitors mounted in the lobby. The celebrations come to an end with a communion service on the first Sunday of the New Year.

Brian Johnston
Romania

The Rev. Karen Horst, Moderator of the 141st General Assembly, the Rev. Dr. Rick Horst, the Rev. Dr. Glynis Williams, Associate Secretary of International Ministries, and Andrew Faiz, Senior Editor of The Presbyterian Record visited Eastern Europe in September.

The delegation from the Presbyterian Church in Canada had two very important meetings in Romania. On September 25, they met with Bishop Kato Bela in Cluj and on September 28, with Bishop Csuri Istvan in Oradea. I was proud to be a part of this important step in further strengthening the relationship between our two national churches.

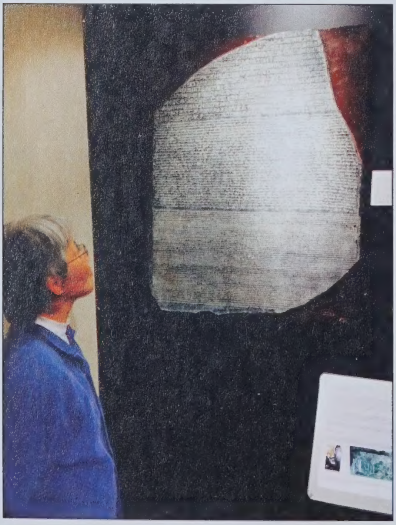
We also attended church in Aponagyfalu (Nuseni) on Sunday morning. We were hosted by pastor Tordai Arpad and family. The children's music, led by Gergely Arnold, was awesome. Arnold's ongoing musical education has been possible through funds donated from Gifts of Change: Share the Gift of Music in Romania.

Anna and David Pandy-Szekeres also spent valuable time with the Canadian delegation during their time in Eastern Europe.

Presbyterial

Thirty WMS ladies from **Westminster** Presbyterial in Metro Vancouver spent an enjoyable day over lunch at Calvin Presbyterian Church in Abbotsford, followed by a most enjoyable visit to The Metzger Collection at Columbia Bible College.

The Metzger Collection was the work of a lifetime for the Rev. Dr. Frederick Metzger, a Presbyterian Minister at St Columba's Church in Vancouver. He was a pastor and missionary who was honoured for his work in protecting Jews in Nazi-era Hungary and assisting Hungarian refugees in emigrating to Canada. After touring Israel in 1967, Rev. Metzger began to collect museum-quality replicas of artwork and artifacts from his many trips to Israel and throughout Europe. Over the years, his collection grew to include 1,200 pieces that have been beautifully and professionally displayed for all to enjoy. What unites the collection is Metzger's passion for showing how the Bible intersects with culture and history and takes visitors on a chronological journey through history and civilizations.



In 2012, Columbia Bible College became the owners of the collection fulfilling Rev. Metzger's dream of having a permanent home for the items where they could be enjoyed by all.

Bruce Grey Presbyterial held their Fall Rally on Sept. 17 at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Hanover. Greetings from the Rev. Bonnie Sutherland were extended, and our Presbyterial President, Pat Edwards, and St. Andrew's WMS President, Debbie Schenk, also welcomed everyone. Music followed by pianist Linda Finlay, soloist Ann Lallouet, and violinist, Bonnie Sutherland.

The ladies from Dromore led the worship. The morning speaker, Pastor Kevin Hart, who ministers to the Saugeen First Nations people near the town of Southampton, spoke about the medicine wheel and how each colour is related to the four directions: east, south, west, and north. Members

stood and faced each of the four directions while a prayer was said.

Kevin showed pictures of his church, Saugeen Wesley United, and talked about the history of this area and how the original treaties of long ago have not been honoured by our government. Peace, honour, and respect were part of a treaty in the 1600s . It is important for us to read the recommendations and Calls to Action from The Truth and Reconciliation Commission and look at ways that we can respond to this.

Several meaningful projects are taking place on the Saugeen First Nations' land. One of them is that several Aboriginal men are being trained in the ancient craft of dry stone masonry. Another is the local women's shelter which is involved in a Take Back the Night vigil to focus on recognizing the missing and murdered Aboriginal women.

In the afternoon, we had the honour of having Colleen Wood as our guest speaker. Colleen spoke about her trip to India two years ago and her visit to Jobat where the new hostel (built with WMS funds) was officially opened. She showed us pictures of this facility where children can now live in clean, safe conditions while attending school. Colleen also visited the Indore Christian hospital and described various PWS&D projects involving schools and community initiatives, such as teaching people how to start up small businesses.

Colleen also attended the Regional Women's Gathering in Jobat where she found similarities between their activities and ours here in Canada: worship, education, skits, songs, eating together, and raising funds for their community.

Two new Together We Can! projects were outlined—the Maya-Mam project in Guatemala and the ARISE program in Toronto—both important, worthy ventures we need to get involved with and support.

The meeting closed with prayer and singing, Brother, Sister Let Me Serve You.

-Linda Doll

The **Lanark-Renfrew** WMS held their June Rally in Renfrew on June 6. The ladies were greeted by president, Mary-Lynn McConnachie and welcomed by Betty Zwiers. The hymn, What a Friend We Have in Jesus, was sung.

Irene Nesbitt gave the Council Report. The theme of the WMS Council meeting in Crieff in June was Seize the Hope. Susan McLennan, who grew up in Manotick, is the new WMS President. There were several interesting speakers; among them were Guy Smagghe of PWS&D and Betty Siverns, the past WMS President. Susan Clarke was honoured for her work as the manager of The Book Room. The Together We Can! Projects for 2015–2016 are the Arise Ministry in Toronto and Maya-Mam women of Guatemala. June Campbell spoke on Human Trafficking and showed the video Honor Diaries, which tracks the plight of Muslim women. Saturday's Bible Study was led by the Rev. Kristine O'Brien and Sunday's worship time was led by the Rev. Mark McLennan, who is the husband of our new president.

Mary-Lynn McConnachie led the devotions. While wearing an apron she read A Recipe for Friendship, written by Julia Bettencourt. Holding up each baking ingredient for chocolate chip cookies, Mary-Lynn explained how each ingredient provides for the cookies, just as friends do for our lives. A Bible study on friendship followed. There were questions about characteristics of friends and related Bible verses to check the answers.

The afternoon began with a hymn-sing, and the program followed. The ladies worked in pairs and learned about each other. They shared their prayer needs so that each woman would have someone praying for them in the time to come. Each lady was given a page on which there were nine pictures of women who were/are involved nationally or internationally with the WMS. This was followed with a questionnaire on Women of the Bible.

The meeting closed with prayer and each lady departed with a Sister in Christ friendship kit, courtesy of Mary-Lynn McConnachie.

Brockville Presbyterial held their Fall Rally on September 14 at St. Paul's, Kemptville. The Synodical of Quebec and Eastern Ontario where special guests, having conducted their meeting in the morning.

President Irene Nesbitt conducted the worship, assisted by Ruth Davidson, based on the theme, Seize the Hope. They answered the questions of where is the hope, using the scriptures and stories from areas of the world where hope rises out of slums and conditions of the poorest of the poor.

Trish (Pat) Grainger, Vice-president of Synodical, was then introduced and reported on her

exposure tour to Malawi. The Presbyterian Church in Canada partners with the Church of Central Africa. The people she met gave the very best they had from very little and they were greeted with joyous singing.

Recently, with the introduction of better farming techniques, the economy has been helped. As well, the introduction of goat farming has been beneficial. One goat is given to a family, and after breeding, they give one goat back to the community, In addition, they have been growing blue gum trees, a fast growing hardwood tree, and regenerating the cassava root plant for food and income, which helps to provide income for school fees and additional food for the family.

Other initiatives include drilling bore holes for clean water, building bridges over contaminiated water to ward off disease, and improved postnatal care for women and infants. Most Christians meet every morning at 7 a.m. at their church to begin the day, saying, "God is good."

After lunch, Shahrzad Kandalaft opened with prayer and a meditation on The Hands and Feet of Christ, based on Isaiah 61:1–2. She reminded us to spend time with God, to wait for his guidance, and to follow his example to love even our enemies and outcasts.

Then Rev. Dr. Paul Mclean, and Mary Beth McLean spoke on their call to mission in Taiwan in 1982. They raised their family in Taiwan as they served The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, and The Bible Society of Taiwan. Paul currently works with four indigenous translation teams of pastors and elders in Taiwan, working to translate the Bible into their languages. Many of the indigenous people are Christian and they are planting churches, training pastors, building medical mission, and training medical staff.

-Donna Wilson

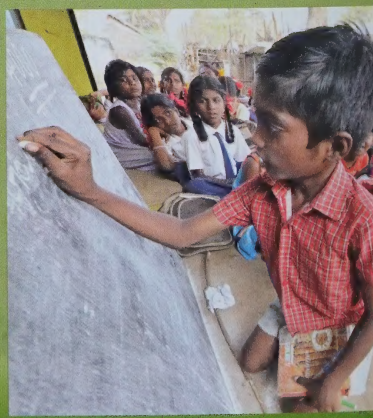
On October 30th, many of The Presbyterian Church in Canada staff, along with staff from The Women's Missionary Society, wore orange shirts to remember the children who attended residential schools. This small act reminds us that every child matters.

WE RESPOND

Inspired by God's Promise of Abundant Life...

PWS&D envisions a sustainable, compassionate and just world.

Be a part of this vision. Donate today.



Presbyterian World Service & Development

50 Wynford Drive,
Toronto, ON M3C 1J7
1-800-619-7301 ext. 291
WeRespond.ca

Remembering: Grace van Donkersgoed

Grace van Donkersgoed passed away on April 21, 2015. She was the last President of the Listowel Town WMS and received her life membership in 1984.

Grace was also a faithful member of Knox Listowel Willing Workers and a great supporter of all church mission. She was very generous in supporting others and volunteering in community organizations and not afraid to share her faith. Her smile, laughter, and storytelling brightened everyone's day.

She is sadly missed and we thank God for her life of service.

Remembering

Isabel Jeffray
Edith Stokes
Belmore WMS, Knox,
Belmore ON

Alice Ellis
Lily Griffiths
Phyllis McCulloch
St. Andrew's,
Campbellford ON

Margaret Joyce Cole
St. Andrew's WMS,
Guelph ON

Verle Payne
Kathleen Gowland
Ruby Walker WMS,
St. Andrew's, Huntsville
ON

Jean Rae
St. Andrew's WMS
Kitchener, ON

Jean Bakogeorge
Dorothy Campbell
Leila Black
St. Andrew's, Lindsay ON

Anna Neill
New St. James, London
ON

Margaret Duncan
Robertson Auxiliary
WMS, Knox, Milton ON

Doris Hocking
Friendship Auxiliary,
St. Marys ON

Sheila Lamb
St. Andrew's
Presbyterian WMS,
Owen Sound ON

Marianne R. MacDonald
Knox, Vankleek Hill ON

Barbara H Ewing
Knox, Vankleek Hill ON
Kenyon WMS,
Dunvegan ON

Lest We Forget

On November 11th, take a few minutes to remember.

Pray for those who have served to preserve freedom and promote justice.

Pray for those who have lost loved ones in service to this country.

Pray for those who continue to serve in our Armed Forces.

Pray for peace.

PM40013283 R9517

Please report any errors/changes in address